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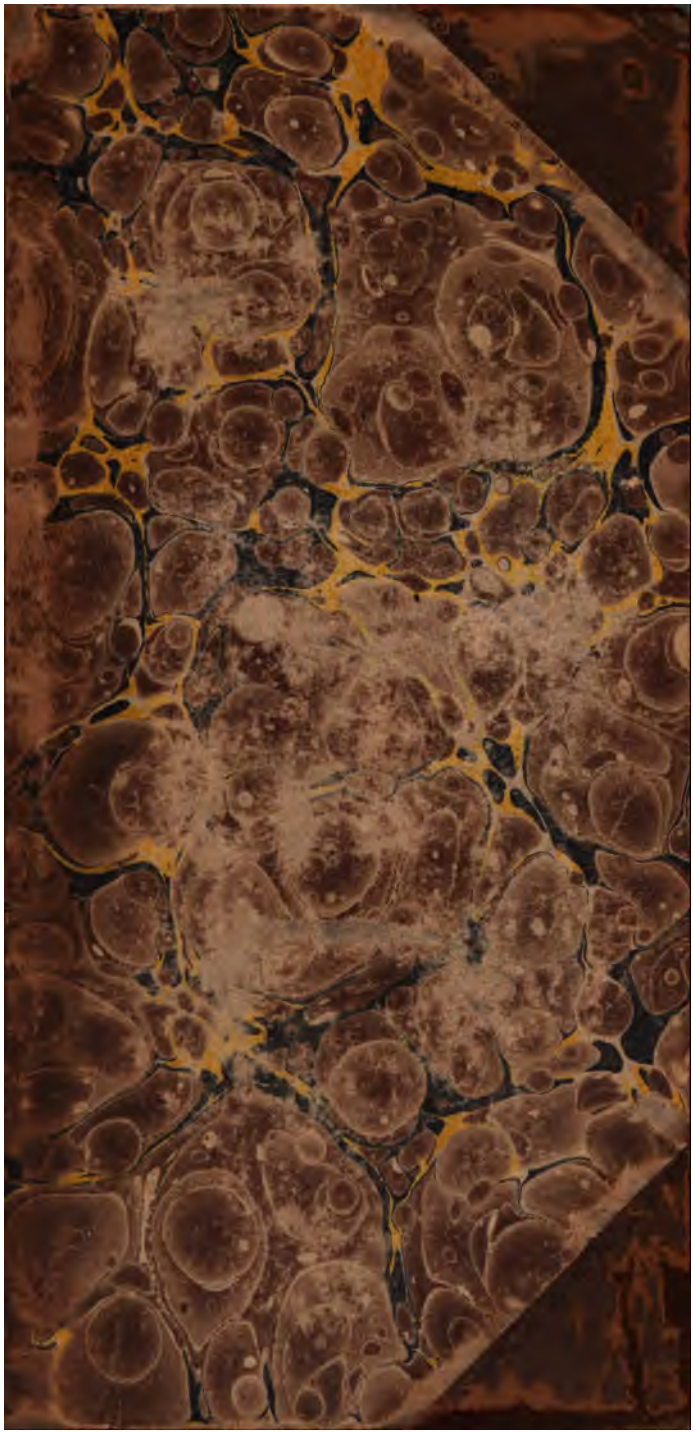

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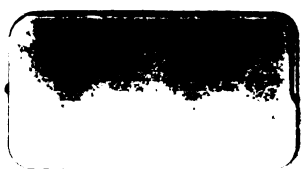

I mo 1824

THE

CANON

OF THE

Old and New Testaments

ASCERTAINED;

OR,

THE BIBLE COMPLETE

WITHOUT THE

APOCRYPHA & UNWRITTEN TRADITIONS.

BY ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER,

Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology, in the Theological Seminary, at Princeton, N. J.

And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable.—PAUL.

PRINCETON PRESS:
Printed and Published by D. A. Borrenstein,
FOR G. AND C. CARVILL, NEW YORK.

1826.

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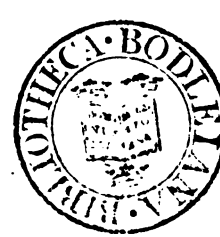
District of New Jersey, to wit:

L. S. *BE IT REMEMBERED*, That on the Nineteenth day of September, in the Fifty-first year of the Independence of the United States of America, Anno Domini 1826, D. A. BORRENSTEIN, of the said District, hath deposited in this Office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as proprietor, in the words following, to wit:

The Canon of the Old and New Testaments ascertained; or the Bible complete without the Apocrypha and Unwritten Traditions. By ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER, Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology, in the Theological Seminary, at Princeton, New Jersey. *And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable.*—PAUL.

In conformity to an act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, "An act for the encouragement of learning by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned." And also to the act entitled, "An act supplementary to an act entitled, An act for the encouragement of learning by securing the copies of Maps, Charts and Books to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, etching, and engraving historical prints.

WM. PENNINGTON,
Clerk of the District of New Jersey.



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PREFACE.

One motive which induced the author to undertake the following compilation, was the desire of furnishing a supplement to the little volume which he recently published, on the Evidences of the Christian Religion; for the argument for the truth of Divine Revelation cannot be considered complete, without the testimonies, by which the Canonical authority of the several books of Scripture is established. But he was also influenced by the consideration, that a convenient and compendious work on this subject, is a *desideratum*, in our English Theological Literature. The works which we possess on the Canon of Scripture, are either too learned or too voluminous, for the use of common readers. Besides, the whole subject has been seldom treated by the same author; for while one vindicates the Canon of the Old Testament alone, another confines himself to the settling of the Canon of the New Testament.

The object of the writer of this work is to exhibit a compendious view of the whole subject, and in such a form as will be level to the capacities of all descriptions of readers. He has aimed at bringing forward the result of the researches of learned men, who have

treated this subject, in such a manner, that the substance of their works might be easily accessible to that numerous class of readers, who are unskilled in the learned languages. It was, moreover, his opinion, that such a volume as this, would not be unacceptable to theological students, and to clergymen, who have it not in their power to procure more costly works.

As a considerable portion of the materials used in composing this treatise have been derived from others, the author feels it to be incumbent on him, to give due credit to those learned authors from whom he has received aid; which can be more conveniently done, at once, in this place, than by perpetual references, in the body of the work.

In the First Part, which relates to the Canon of the Old Testament, assistance has been derived from *The Panstratia of Chamier*, *The Isagoge of Buddeus*, *The Thesaurus Philologicus of Hottinger*, *Prideaux's Connexion*, *Wilson on the Apocrypha*; and above all, from *Bishop Cosin's Scholastick History of the Canon of the Old Testament.*

In the Second Part, on the Canon of the New Testament, the testimonies adduced, have been principally selected from the ample collections of the impartial and indefatigable LARDNER; but in all that relates to the Apocryphal books of the New Testament, little else has been done, than to abridge and arrange the

information contained in the valuable work of the learned JEREMIAH JONES, on the Canon of the New Testament.

On the subject of the Oral Law of the Jews, the author has freely availed himself of the labours of that great polemic, HORNBEEK, in his learned work, *Contrâ Judæos*. On that of Unwritten Traditions, he found no writer more satisfactory, than CHEMNITIUS, in his *Examen Con. Trid.* By the introduction of a discussion on these points, into a treatise on the Canon of Scripture, he acknowledges that he has departed from the usual method of treating the subject; but he is persuaded, that a little consideration will convince every candid reader, that the sufficiency and perfection of the Scriptures, cannot be demonstrated, unless it be shown, that no part of divine revelation was left to be handed down by unwritten tradition. For if, as many believe, an important part of the doctrines and institutions of Christianity has been transmitted to us, only through this channel, it will answer very little purpose to prove, that our Bibles comprehend all the books ever written by inspiration for the use of the Catholic Church; since, on this hypothesis, an essential part of divine revelation is not contained in the Scriptures, and was, indeed, never committed to writing. But the object in this work is to show, *that the Bible is complete, containing*,

all things necessary to guide the faith and practice of every sincere Christian; and that the church is in possession of no other revelation, but what is recorded in these Sacred Books.

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PART X.

INTRODUCTION.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ASCERTAINING THE TRUE CANON OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

THE Bible includes a large number of separate books, published in different ages, during a space of more than fifteen hundred years. Each of these books, when first published, formed a volume; or at least, the writings of each author, were, in the beginning, distinct: and if they had continued in that separate form, and had been transmitted to us, in many volumes instead of one, their authority would not, on this account, have been less, nor their usefulness diminished. Their collection into one volume, is merely a matter of convenience; and if any persons choose, now, to publish these books in a separate form, they cannot with propriety be charged with casting any indignity on the word of God.

Hence it appears, that besides general arguments to demonstrate that the Bible contains a divine revelation, there is need of special proofs to evince, that each of the books now included in that sacred volume, has a right to the place which it occupies; or does in reality contain a part of that revelation which God has given.

If, therefore, it could be shown (which however it never can) that some particular book, now included in the Bible, was not authentic, the conclusion thence derived would only affect that single production; unless it were recognized as divine by the writers of the other books. The credit of the whole volume would not be destroyed, even if it could be proved, that one half the books of which it consists were spurious. Infidels have much more to effect in overthrowing the Bible, than they commonly suppose. It is incumbent on them to demonstrate, not only that this, or that book, is false, but that every one of these productions is destitute of evidence that it has been derived from the inspiration of God.

On the other hand, it is manifest, that the advocate of divine revelation is bound to defend the claims of every separate portion of this volume; or to reject from it that part, which has no evidence of a divine origin. It is necessary, that he should be able to render a good reason why he admits any particular book, to form a part of the inspired volume.

It is true, that the antiquity of this collection claims for it a high degree of respect: the transmission of this volume to us, through so many centuries, as HOLY SCRIPTURE, should teach us to be cautious how we question what is so venerable for its antiquity. But this only furnishes

one presumptive argument in favour of each book. It by no means renders all further investigation unnecessary; much less impious.

It is easy to conceive, that books not written by the inspiration of God, might, by some casualty, or mistake, find a place in the sacred volume. In fact, we have a striking example of this very thing, in the Greek, and Latin Bibles, which are now in use, and held to be sacred, by a large majority of those who are denominated Christians. These Bibles, besides the books which have evidence of being truly inspired, contain a number of other books, the claim of which to inspiration, cannot be sustained by solid and satisfactory reasons. This inquiry therefore, is far from being one of mere curiosity: it is, in the highest degree *practical*, and concerns the conscience of every man, capable of making the investigation. We agree, in the general, that the Bible is the Word of God, and an authoritative rule; but the momentous question immediately presents itself, what belongs to the Bible? Of what books does this sacred volume consist? And it will not answer, to resolve to take it as it has come down to us, without further inquiry; for the Bible has come down to us, in several different forms. The Vulgate Latin Bible, which only was in use, for hundreds of years before the era of the reformation, and also the Greek version of the Old Testament, contain many books, not in the copies

of the Hebrew Scriptures. Now to determine which of these contains the whole inspired books given to the Jews before the advent of Christ, and no more, requires research, and accurate examination. The inquiry, therefore, is not optional, but forces itself upon every conscientious man: for as no one is at liberty to reject from the sacred volume, one sentence, much less a whole book of the revelation of God; so, no one has a right to add any thing to the word of God; and of consequence, no one may receive as divine, what others have without authority added to the HOLY SCRIPTURES. Every man, therefore, according to his opportunity and capacity, is under a moral obligation to use his best endeavours to ascertain what books do, really, and of right, belong to the Bible. An error here, on either side, is dangerous: for on the one hand, if we reject a part of divine revelation, we dishonour God, and deprive ourselves of the benefit which might be derived from that portion of divine truth; and on the other hand, we are guilty of an equal offence, and may suffer an equal injury, by adding spurious productions to the Holy Scriptures; for thus we adulterate and poison the fountain of life; and subject our consciences to the authority of mere men.

I think, therefore, that the importance and necessity of this inquiry must be evident to every person of serious reflexion. But to some it may appear, that this matter has been long ago settled

on the firmest principles; and that it can answer no good purpose to agitate questions, which have a tendency to produce doubts and misgivings in the minds of common Christians, rather than a confirmation of their faith. In reply to the first part of this objection, I would say, that it is freely admitted, that this subject has been ably and fully discussed long ago, and in almost every age until the present time; and the author aims at nothing more, in this short treatise, than to exhibit to the sincere inquirer, who may not enjoy better means of information, the substance of those discussions and proofs, which ought to be in the possession of every Christian: his object is not to bring forth any thing new, but to collect, and condense in a narrow space, what has been written by the judicious and the learned, on this important subject. But, that discussion tends to induce doubting, is a sentiment unworthy of Christians, who maintain that their religion is founded on the best reasons, and who are commanded *to give to every man a reason of the hope that is in them.* That faith which is weakened by discussion is mere prejudice, not true faith. They who receive the most important articles of their religion, upon trust, from human authority, are continually liable to be thrown into doubt; and the only method of obviating this evil, is to dig deep and lay our foundation upon a rock. If this objection had any weight, it would discourage all attempts to establish the

truth of our holy religion, by argument; and would also damp the spirit of free inquiry, on every important subject. It is true, however, that the first effect of free discussion, may be, to shake that *easy confidence*, which most men entertain, that all their opinions are correct: but the beneficial result will be, that instead of a persuasion, having no other foundation than prejudice, it will generate a faith resting on the firm basis of evidence.

There is undoubtedly among Christians too great a disposition to acquiesce, without examination, in the religion of their forefathers. There is too great an aversion to that kind of research, which requires time and labour; so, that many who are fully competent to examine the foundation on which their religion rests, never take the pains to enter on the investigation; and it is to be regretted, that many who are much occupied with speculations on points of theology, waste the energies of their minds, on subjects, which can yield them no manner of profit, while they neglect entirely, or but superficially attend to points of fundamental importance.

The two great questions most deserving the attention of all men are; first, whether the Bible, and all that it contains, is from God: second, what are those truths which the Bible was intended to teach us. These two grand inquiries are sufficient to give occupation and vigorous exercise, to intellectual faculties of the highest order; and they

are not removed entirely out of the reach of plain, uneducated Christians. From the fountain of divine truth any one may draw according to his capacity. But these inquiries are neglected, not so much for want of time and capacity, as because we take no pleasure in searching for, and comtemplating, divine truth. Just in proportion as men love the truth and value the Bible, they will take an interest in all inquiries which relate to the authenticity, canonical authority, and correct interpretation of the sacred books. The time will come, I doubt not, when these studies will occupy the minds of thousands, where they now engage the attention of one. The Bible will grow into importance in the estimation of men, just in the same proportion, as true religion flourishes. It will not only be the fashion to associate for printing and circulating the Holy Scriptures; but it wil become customary, for men of the highest literary attainments, as well as others, to study the sacred pages with unceasing assiduity and prayer. And, in proportion as the Bible is understood in its simplicity, and momentous import, the mere doctrines of men will disappear; and the dogmas of the schools and the alliance with philosophy being renounced, there will be among sincere inquiries after truth, an increasing tendency to unity of sentiment, as well as unity of spirit. The pride of learning and of intellect being sacrificed, and all distinctions counted but loss for the excellency of

the knowledge of Christ, a thousand knotty questions, which now cause divisions, and gender strifes, will be forgotten; and the wonder of our more enlightened posterity will be, how good men could have wasted their time and their talents in such unprofitable speculations; and more especially, how they could have permitted themselves, to engage in fierce and unbrotherly contentions, about matters of little importance.

Then also, men will no more neglect and undervalue the Scriptures, on pretence of possessing a brighter light within them, than that which emanates from the divine word. That spurious devotion which affects a superiority to external means and ordinances, will be exchanged for the simple, sincere reliance on the revealed will of God; and those assemblies from which the sacred volume is now excluded, while the effusions of every heated imagination are deemed revelations of the Spirit, will become under the influence of divine truth, churches of the living God.

In those future days of the prosperity of Zion, the service of the most High God will be considered by men, generally, as the noblest employment; and the best talents and attainments will be consecrated, on the altar of God; and the same enterprizes, and the same labours which they now undertake to gratify an avaricious, ambitious, or voluptuous disposition, will be pursued from love to God and man. The merchant will plan, and

travel, and traffic, to obtain the means of propagating the gospel in foreign parts, and promoting Christian knowledge at home; yea the common labourer will cheerfully endure toil and privation, that he may have a mite to cast into the treasury of the Lord.

Now, many consider all that is given to circulate the Bible, and to send missionaries and tracts for the instruction of the ignorant, as so much wasted; but *then*, all expenditures will be considered as profuse and wasteful, which terminate in mere selfish gratification; and those funds will alone be reckoned useful, which are applied to promote the glory of God and the welfare of men.

These, however, may appear to many as the visions of a heated imagination, which will never be realized; but if the same change in the views and sentiments of men which has been going on for thirty years past, shall continue to advance with the same steady pace, half a century will not have elapsed from the present time, before such a scene will be exhibited to the admiring eyes of believers, as will afford full ground to justify hopes as sanguine, as those expressed in the foregoing anticipations.

But I have wandered, wide of my subject—I will now recall the attention of the reader to the consideration of the exceeding great importance of ascertaining the true Canon of Holy Scripture. This investigation may indeed, appear dry, and un-

entertaining, but every thing which bears any relation to the great Charter of our privileges and our hopes ought to be interesting to us. It has been my object, to bring this subject not only more conveniently within the reach of the Theological student, but also to a level withthe capacity of the common christian. That this little work may in some humble degree subserve the cause of the Bible, is the sincere prayer of

THE AUTHOR.

SECTION I.

EARLY USE, AND IMPORT OF THE WORD CANON.

The word CANON, literally, signifies A RULE; and it is used in this sense, several times in the New Testament, as Gal. vi. 16. *As many as walk according to this rule.* Phil. iii, 16. *Let us walk by the same rule.*

But in these passages, there is no reference to the Scriptures, as a volume.

The word CANON, however, was early used by the Christian Fathers, to designate the inspired Scriptures. IRENÆUS, speaking of the Scriptures, calls them THE CANON OF TRUTH. CLEMENT of Alexandria, referring to a quotation of the Gospel according to the Egyptians, says, "But they follow any thing, rather than THE TRUE EVANGELICAL CANON."

EUSEBIUS says of Origen, "But in the first book of his commentaries on the Gospel of Matthew, observing THE ECCLESIASTICAL CANON, he declares, that he knew of four Gospels only."

ATHANASIUS, in his Festal Epistle, speaks of three sorts of books; THE CANONICAL; such as were allowed to be read; and such as were Apo-

cryphal. By the first he evidently means, such as we now call CANONICAL.

THE COUNCIL OF LAODICEA ordained, "that none but CANONICAL books should be read in the church; that is, the books of the Old, and New Testament."

RUFIN, after enumerating the books of the Old and New Testaments, goes on to mention three classes of books. 1. Such as were included in the canon; 2. Ecclesiastical, or such as were allowed to be read; 3. Apocryphal, such as were not permitted to be publicly read.

JEROME often speaks of the CANON of Scripture, and mentions books which might be read, but did not belong to the canon.

THE THIRD COUNCIL OF CARTHAGE ordained, "that nothing beside THE CANONICAL SCRIPTURES be read in the church, under the name of the Divine Scriptures."

AUGUSTINE often makes mention of THE CANONICAL SCRIPTURES, and THE WHOLE CANON OF SCRIPTURE; meaning to designate all the sacred books of the Old and New Testaments. "We read of some," says he, "that they searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so. What Scriptures, I pray, except the CANONICAL Scriptures, of the Law and the Prophets. To them have been since added, the Gospels, the Epistles of the Apostles, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Revelation of John."

CHRYSOSTOM says, "They fall into great absurdities, who will not follow THE CANON of THE DIVINE SCRIPTURE, but trust to their own reasoning."

ISIDORE of Pelusium observes, "That these things are so, we shall perceive, if we attend to the CANON OF TRUTH; the Divine Scriptures."

And LEONTIUS of Constantinople, having cited the whole catalogue of the books of Sacred Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, concludes, "These are the ancient and the new books, which are received in the church, as CANONICAL."

From the authorities cited above, it will evidently appear, that at an early period, the Sacred Scriptures were carefully distinguished from all other writings, and formed a rule, which all Christians considered to be authoratative: and that this collection of sacred writings, received the name of CANON.

The division of the sacred books which is most ancient and universal, is, into the OLD TESTAMENT, and the NEW TESTAMENT. The Apostle Paul, himself, lays a foundation for this distinction; for, in his second Epistle to the Corinthians, he uses the phrases, OLD TESTAMENT, and NEW TESTAMENT: and in one instance, designates the Scriptures of the Law, by the former title; *For until this day,* says he, *remaineth the same veil un-*

2 Cor. iii. 14.

taken away in the reading of the Old Testament.

It is our object, in this work, to inquire into the CANON, both of the Old and New Testament, and to discuss all the principal questions, connected with this subject.

SECTION II.

CONSTITUTION OF THE CANON OF THE OLD TESTAMENT BY EZRA—THE CANON OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AS IT NOW EXISTS, SANCTIONED BY CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES—CATALOGUES OF THE BOOKS BY SOME OF THE EARLY FATHERS—AGREEMENT OF JEWS AND CHRISTIANS ON THIS SUBJECT.

The five books of Moses, were, when finished, carefully deposited by the side of the ark of the Covenant, Deut. xxxi. 24, 25, 26. *And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this Law in a book, until they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites which bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying, take this book of the Law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee.*

No doubt, copies of the sacred volume were made out before it was deposited in the most holy place; for as it was there inaccessible to any but the priests, the people generally must have remained ignorant, had there been no copies of the Law. But we know that copies were written, for it was one of the laws respecting the duty of a king, when

such an officer should be appointed, that he should write out a copy of the Law with his own hand. Deut. xvii. 18—20, *And it shall be when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book, out of that which is before the priests, the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein, all the days of his life; that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes to do them. That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.* It is related by Josephus, that by the direction of Moses, a copy of the law was prepared for each of the tribes of Israel.

It seems that the book of Joshua was annexed to the volume of the Pentateuch; for we read, that *Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God.* And the matters contained in this book, were of public concern to the nation, as well as those recorded in the law. For, as in the latter were written statutes and ordinances, to direct them in all matters sacred and civil; so, in the former was recorded, the division of the land among the tribes. The possession of each tribe was here

See Josh. i. 8, xxiv. 26.

accurately defined; so that this book served as a National deed of conveyance. When other books were added to the CANON, no doubt, the inspired men who were moved by the Holy Spirit to write them, would be careful to deposit copies in the sanctuary, and to have other copies put into circulation. But on this subject we have no precise information. We know not with what degree of care the sacred books were guarded, or to what extent copies were multiplied.

A single fact shows that the sacred autograph of Moses had well nigh perished, in the idolatrous reigns of Manasseh and Amon, but was found, during the reign of the pious Josiah, among the rubbish of the temple. It cannot, however, be reasonably supposed, that there were no other copies of the law scattered through the nation. It does indeed seem that the young king had never seen the book, and was ignorant of its contents, until it was now read to him; but while the copy in the temple had been misplaced, and buried among the ruins, many pious men might have possessed private copies.

And although at the destruction of Jerusalem and of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar, this precious volume was, in all probability, destroyed with the ark and all the holy apparatus of the sanctuary; yet, we are not to credit the Jewish tradition, too readily received by the Christian Fathers, that on this occasion all the copies of the Scriptures were

lost, and that Ezra restored the whole by miracle. This is a mere Jewish fable, depending on no higher authority than a passage in the fourth book of Esdras, and is utterly inconsistent with facts recorded in the sacred volume. We know, that Daniel had a copy of the Scriptures, for he quotes them, and makes express mention of the Prophecies of Jeremiah. And Ezra is called, *a ready scribe in the Law;* and it is said, in the sixth chapter of Ezra, that when the temple was finished, the functions of the priests and Levites were regulated, *as it is written in the book of Moses.* And this was many years before Ezra came to Jerusalem. And in the eighth chapter of Nehemiah, it is said, that Ezra, at the request of the people, *brought the law before the congregation, and he read therein from the morning until mid day. And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people.* It is evident, therefore, that all the copies of the Scpritures were not lost during the captivity. This story, no doubt, originated from two facts: the first, that the autographs, in the temple had been destroyed with that sacred edifice; and the second, that Ezra took great pains to have correct copies of the Scriptures prepared and circulated.

It seems to be agreed by all, that the forming of the present Canon of the Old Testament, should be attributed to Ezra. To assist him in this work, the Jewish writers inform us, that there existed in his

time, A GREAT SYNAGOGUE, consisting of one hundred and twenty men, including Daniel and his three friends, Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego; the prophets Haggai and Zechariah; and also Simon the Just. But it is very absurd to suppose that all these lived at one time, and formed one synagogue, as they are pleased to represent it: for, from the time of Daniel to that of Simon the Just, no less than two hundred and fifty years must have intervened.

It is, however, no how improbable, that Ezra was assisted in this great work by many learned and pious men, who were contemporary with him; and as prophets had always been the superintendents, as well as writers of the sacred volume, it is likely that the inspired men who lived at the same time as Ezra, would give attention to this work. But in regard to this great synagogue, the only thing probable is, that the men, who are said to have belonged to it, did not live in one age, but successively, until the time of Simon the Just, who was made high priest about twenty five years after the death of Alexander the Great. This opinion has its probability increased, by the consideration, that the Canon of the Old Testament appears not to have been fully completed, until about the time of Simon the Just. Malachi seems to have lived after the time of Ezra, and therefore his prophecy could not have been added to the Canon by this eminent scribe; unless we adopt the opinion of the Jews, who will have Malachi to be no other

than Ezra himself; maintaining that while Ezra was his proper name, he received that of Malachi, from the circumstance of his having been *sent* to superintend the religious concerns of the Jews; for the import of that name is, *a messenger*, or one sent.

But this is not all, in the book of Nehemiah, mention is made of the high priest Jaddua, and of Darius Codomannus, king of Persia, both of whom lived at least a hundred years after the time of Ezra. In the third chapter of the first book of Chronicles, the genealogy of the sons of Zerubbabel is carried down, at least to the time of Alexander the Great. This book, therefore, could not have been put into the Canon by Ezra; nor much earlier than the time of Simon the Just. The book of Esther also was probably added during this interval.

The probable conclusion, therefore, is, that Ezra began this work, and collected and arranged all the sacred books which belonged to the Canon before his time, and that a succession of pious and learned men continued to pay attention to the Canon, until the whole was completed, about the time of Simon the Just. After which, nothing was ever added to the Canon of the Old Testament.

Most, however, are of opinion that nothing was added after the book of Malachi was written, ex-

Neh. xii. 22.

cept a few names and notes; and that all the books belonging to the Canon of the Old Testament, were collected and inserted in the sacred volume by Ezra himself. And this opinion seems to be the safest, and is no how incredible in itself. It accords also with the uniform tradition of the Jews, that Ezra completed the Canon of the Old Testament; and that after Malachi there arose no prophet, who added any thing to the sacred volume.

Whether the books were now collected into a single volume, or were bound up in several *codices*, is a question of no importance: if we can ascertain what books were received as Canonical, it matters not in what form they were preserved. It seems probable, however, that the sacred books were at this time distributed into three volumes, THE LAW; THE PROPHETS; and the HAGIOGRAPHA. This division, we know to be as ancient as the time of our Saviour, for he says, *These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things might be fulfilled, which are written in* THE LAW, *and in* THE PROPHETS, *and in* THE PSALMS, *concerning me.* Josephus, also, makes mention of this division, and it is by the Jews, with one consent, referred to Ezra, as its author.

In establishing the Canon of the Old Testament, we might labour under considerable uncertainty and embarrasment, in regard to several books,

Luke xxiv. 44.

were it not, that the whole of what were called THE SCRIPTURES, and which were included in the threefold division, mentioned above, received the explicit sanction of our Lord. He was not backward to reprove the Jews for disobeying, misinterpreting, and adding their traditions, to the Scriptures, but he never drops a hint that they had been unfaithful or careless, in the preservation of the sacred books. So far from this, he refers to THE SCRIPTURES as an infallible rule, which *must be fulfilled*, and *could not be broken*. *Search the scriptures*, said he, *for in them ye think ye have eternal life, but they are they which testify of me.* The errors of the Sadducees are attributed to an ignorance of the Scriptures: and they are never mentioned but with the highest respect, and as the unerring word of God. The apostle Paul, also, referring, principally, if not wholly, to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, says, *And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.* They are also called by this apostle THE ORACLES OF GOD; THE LIVELY ORACLES, THE WORD OF GOD; and when quotations are made from David, it is represented as *the Holy Ghost speaking by*

Mark xiv. 49. John x. 35.
John v. 39. 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16.
Heb. iii. 7. James i. 21—23.

the mouth of David. The testimony of Peter is not less explicit, for he says: *The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.* And the apostle James speaks of the Scriptures, with equal confidence and respect; *And receive with meekness,* says he, *the ingrafted word which is able to save your souls. And the scripture was fulfilled which saith,* &c. *Do ye think that the Scripture saith in vain?* &c.

We have, therefore, an important point established with the utmost certainty, that the volume of Scripture which existed in the time of Christ and his apostles, was uncorrupted, and was esteemed by them an inspired and infallible rule. Now, if we can ascertain what books were then included in the Sacred Volume, we shall be able to settle the Canon of the Old Testament without uncertainty.

But here lies the difficulty. Neither Christ, nor any of his apostles has given us a catalogue of the books, which composed the Scriptures of the Old Testament. They have distinctly quoted a number of these books; and so far the evidence is complete. We know, that THE LAW and THE PROPHETS and THE PSALMS were included in their Canon. But this does not ascertain, particu-

2 Pet. i. 21 James iv. 5.

larly, whether the very same books which we now find in the Old Testament were then found in it, and no others. It is necessary then, to resort to other sources of information. And happily, the Jewish historian Josephus furnishes us with the very information which we want: not indeed as explicitly, as we could wish, but sufficiently so to lead us to a very satisfactory conclusion. He does not name the books of the Old Testament, but he numbers them, and so describes them, that there is scarcely room for any mistake. The important passage to which we refer, is in his first book against Apion, "We have" says he "only two and twenty books, which are to be believed as of divine authority; of which five are the books of Moses. From the death of Moses, to the reign of Artaxerxes the son of Xerxes, king of Persia, the Prophets who were the successors of Moses have written in thirteen books. The remaining four books contain hymns to God, and documents of life, for the use of men." Now the five books of Moses are universally agreed to be, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The thirteen books, written by the prophets, will include Joshua, Judges with Ruth, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah with Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, the Twelve minor Prophets, Job, Ezra, Esther, and Chronicles. The four remaining books will be, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon, which make the whole

number *twenty-two*; the Canon then existing is proved to be the same, as that which we now possess. It would appear, indeed, that these books might more conveniently be reckoned *twenty-four*; and this is the present method of numbering them, by the modern Jews; but formerly, the number was regulated by that of the Hebrew alphabet, which consists of twenty two letters, therefore, they annexed the small book of Ruth to Judges; and probably it is a continuation of this book by the same author. They added, also, the Lamentations of Jeremiah to his prophecy, and this was natural enough. As to the Minor Prophets, which form twelve separate books in our Bibles, they were anciently, always reckoned one book, so they are considered in every ancient catalogue, and in all quotations from them.

It will not be supposed that any change could have occurred in the Canon from the time of our Saviour and his apostles, to that in which Josephus wrote. Indeed, he may be considered the contemporary of the apostles, as he was born about the time of Paul's conversion to Christianity; and was therefore grown up to man's age, long before the death of this apostle; and the apostle John probably survived him. And it must be remembered, that Josephus is here giving his testimony to a public fact: he is declaring what books were received as divine by his nation; and he

does it without hesitation, or inconsistency. "We have" says he "only twenty two books, which are believed to be of divine authority."

We are able also to adduce other testimony, to prove the same thing. Some of the early Christian Fathers, who had been brought up in Paganism, when they embraced Christianity, were curious in their inquiries into the Canon of the Old Testament; and the result of the researches of some of them, still remain. MELITO bishop of Sardis travelled into Judea, for the very purpose of satisfying himself on this point. And although, his own writings are lost, Eusebius has preserved his catalogue of the books of the Old Testament; from which it appears, that the very same books were, in his day, received into the Canon, as are now found in our Hebrew Bibles. And the interval between Melito and Josephus is not a hundred years, so that no alteration in the Canon can be reasonably supposed to have taken place in this period. Very soon after Melito, ORIGEN furnishes us with a catalogue of the books of the Old Testament, which perfectly accords with our Canon, except that he omits the Minor Prophets; which omission must have been a mere slip of the pen, in him or his copyist, as it is certain, that he received this, as a book of Holy Scripture: and the number of the books of the Old Testament, given by him in this very place, cannot be completed,

without reckoning the Twelve Minor Prophets as one.

After Origen, we have catalogues, in succession, not only by men of the first authority in the church, but by councils, consisting of numerous bishops, all which are perfectly the same as our own. It will be sufficient merely to refer to these sources of information. Catalogues of the books of the Old Testament have been given by ATHANASIUS; by CYRIL; by AUGUSTINE; by JEROME; by RUFIN; by THE COUNCIL OF LAODICEA, in their LX. Canon: and by THE COUNCIL OF CARTHAGE. And when it is considered, that all these catalogues exactly correspond with our present Canon of the Hebrew Bible, the evidence, I think, must appear complete to every impartial mind, that the Canon of the Old Testament is settled upon the clearest historical grounds. There seems to be nothing to be wished for further, in the confirmation of this point

But if all this testimony had been wanting, there is still a source of evidence, to which we might refer with the utmost confidence, as perfectly conclusive on this point; I mean the fact that these books have been, ever since the time of Christ and his apostles, in the keeping of both Jews and Christians, who have been constantly arrayed in opposition to each other; so that it was impossible, that any change should have been made in the Canon, by either party, without being immediate-

ly detected by the other. And the conclusive evidence that no alteration in the Canon has occurred, is, the perfect agreement of these hostile parties, in regard to the books of the Old Testament, at this time. On this point, the Jew and Christian are harmonious. There is no complaint of addition or diminution of the sacred books, on either side. The Hebrew Bible of the Jew, is the Bible of the Christian. There is here no difference. A learned Jew and Christian have even been united, in publishing an excellent edition of the Hebrew Bible.* Now, if any alteration in the Canon has occurred, it must have been by the concert, or collusion of both parties, but how absurd this idea is, must be manifest to all.

I acknowledge what is here said of the agreement of Christians and Jews, can only be said in relation to Protestant Christians. For as to those of the Romanist and Greek Communions, they have admitted other books into the Canon, which Jews and Protestants hold to be Apocryphal; but these books will form the subject of a particular discussion, in the sequel of this work.

The fact is important, that a short time after the Canon of the Old Testament was closed, a translation was made of the whole of the books into the Greek language. This translation was made, at Alexandria, in Egypt, at the request, it is said, of

* See the Biblia Hebraica, edited by Leusden and Athias.

Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, that he might have a copy of these sacred books in the famous library which he was engaged in collecting. It is called THE SEPTUAGINT, from its being made according to the accounts which have been handed down, by seventy, or rather seventy two, men; six from each of the tribes of Israel. So many fabulous things have been reported concerning this version that it is very difficult to ascertain the precise truth. But it is manifest from internal evidence, that it was not the work of one hand, nor, probably, of one set of translators: for, while some books are rendered with great accuracy, and in a very literal manner, others are translated with little care, aud the meaning of the original is very imperfectly given.

The probability is, that the Pentateuch was first translated, and the other books were added from time to time, by different hands; but when the work was once begun, it is not likely that it would be long before the whole was completed.

Now this Greek version contains all the books which are found in our Canonical Hebrew Bibles. It is a good witness therefore to prove, that all these books were in the Canon, when this version was made. The Apocryphal books which have long been connected with this version, will furnish a subject for consideration herafter.

There is, moreover, a distinct and remarkable testimony to the antiquity of the four books of Mo-

ses in the Samaritan Pentateuch, which has existed in a form entirely separate from the Jewish copies, and in a character totally different from that in which the Hebrew Bible has been for many ages written. It has also been preserved and handed down to us, by a people, who have ever been hostile to the Jews. This Pentateuch has, without doubt, been transmitted through a separate channel, ever since the ten tribes of Israel were carried captive. It furnishes authentic testimony to the great antiquity of the books of Moses, and shows how little they have been corrupted, during the lapse of nearly three thousand years.

SECTION III.

APOCRYPHAL BOOKS, THEIR ORIGIN—IMPORTANCE OF DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN CANONICAL AND APOCRYPHAL BOOKS—SIX BOOKS OF THIS CLASS PRONOUNCED CANONICAL BY THE COUNCIL OF TRENT—NOT IN THE HEBREW, NOR RECEIVED BY THE JEWS, ANCIENT OR MODERN.

The word APOCRYPHA signifies, *concealed, obscure, without authority.* In reference to the Bible, it is employed to designate such books as claim a place in the sacred volume, but which are not CANONICAL. It is said to have been first used by MELITO bishop of Sardis.

An inquiry into this subject cannot be uninteresting to the friends of the Bible; for it behoves them to ascertain, on the best evidence, what books belong to the sacred volume, and also, on what grounds other books are rejected from the Canon. This subject assumes a higher importance from the fact, that Christians are much divided on this point; for, some receive as of Canonical authority, books which others reject as spurious, or consider merely as human compositions. On such a point, every Christian should form his opinion upon the best information which he can obtain.

In controversy with the Romanists, this subject

meets us at the very threshhold. It is vain to dispute about particular doctrines of Scripture, until it is determined what books are to be received, as Scripture.

It has also been recently found, that this was a point of great importance, in the circulation of the Bible. This Book ought not to be distributed, maimed of some of its parts; nor should we circulate mere human compositions, as the word of God. The Committe of the British and Foreign Bible Society, were recently called upon to decide this question, in a case of great practical importance. That noble and Catholic society, have, from time to time, aided the exertions of the pious and liberally minded members of the Romanist church, in circulating their own versions of the New Testament. Here there existed no difference of opinion, as to the books which were Canonical; but they lately received an application from that zealous and indefatigable friend of the Bible, Professor VAN ESS, to grant him aid from their funds, to enable him to put the Old Testament also into circulation among the people of his communion. To this no objection was at first made; and the funds of the Society were applied to aid in printing and circulating Bibles which contained the Apocrypha, on the Continent of Europe. But the Auxiliary Bible Society of Edinburg, not being satisfied with this proceeding, sent up to the Parent Society, a protest against it, as being inconsistent with the

radical principle of their constitution; viz. that they would circulate the BIBLE without note or comment. This brought the question before the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society, under very interesting circumstances, and the opinion of the friends of the Society appeared to be much divided; so that great fears were entertained, lest it should become the occasion of disturbing the harmony of this important Association. But the business was managed by the Committee, with that consummate wisdom which has uniformly marked their counsels and proceedings. The whole subject was referred to a select and learned sub-committee; who after mature deliberation, brought in a report, which was adopted, and led to the following wise resolution in the General Committee, viz. "That the funds of the Society be applied to the printing and circulation of the Canonical books of Scripture, to the exclusion of those books and parts of books, which are termed Apocryphal: and that all copies printed, either entirely or in part, at the expense of the Society, and whether such copies consist of the whole, or of any one or more of such books, be invariably issued bound, no other book whatever being bound with them; and farther, that all money grants, to societies or individuals, be made only in conformity with the principle of this regulation."

"In the Sacred Volume, as it is to be hereafter distributed by the Society, there is to be nothing

but divine truth, nothing but what is acknowledged by all Christians to be such. Of course all may unite in the work of distribution, even should they regard the Volume as containing but part of the inspired writings: just as they might in the circulation of the Pentateuch, or the Book of Psalms, or the Prophets, or the New Testament. Such harmonious operation would not, however, be possible, if the books of the Apocrypha were mingled, or joined with the rest; and besides, those, who have the strongest objection to the Apocrypha, are, ordinarily, those who are most forward in active and liberal efforts to send the word of God to all people."

This judicious decision of the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society depends for its correctness, on the supposition, that the books of the Apocrypha are not Canonical; for, whatever may be said about circulating a part of the Bible, it was undoubtedly the original object of this Society to print and circulate *the whole* of the Sacred Volume. Hence appears the practical importance of the inquiry which we have here instituted, to ascertain, whether these books have any claim, whatever, to a place in the Sacred Canon.

At a very early period of the Christian church, great pains were taken to distinguish between such books as were inspired and Canonical, and such as were written by uninspired men. It has neve

been doubted among Christians, that the Canonical books only, were of divine authority, and furnished an infallible rule of faith and practice; but it has not been agreed what books ought to be considered Canonical, and what Apocryphal. In regard to those which have already been enumerated, as belonging to the Old Testament, there is a pretty general consent of Jews and Christians, of Romanists and Protestants; but in regard to some other books there is a wide difference of opinion.

The council of Trent in their fourth session gave a catalogue of the books of the Old Testament, among which are, included, TOBIAS, JUDITH, WISDOM, ECCLESIASTICUS, BARUCH, and TWO BOOKS OF THE MACCABEES.* Besides, they included under the name of Esther and Daniel, certain additional chapters, which are not found in the Hebrew copies. The book of Esther is made to consist of sixteen chapters; and prefixed to the book of Daniel is the THE HISTORY OF SUSANNA; THE SONG OF THE THREE CHILDREN, is inserted in the third chapter; and THE HISTORY OF BEL AND THE DRAGON is added, at the end of this book. Other books, which are found in the Greek, or Latin Bibles, tney rejected, as Apocryphal; as, the third and fourth books of Esdras;† the third book of

* See Note A.

† The First and Second books of Esdras, are very frequently called the Third and Fourth; in which case the two canonical books Ezra and Nehemiah are reckoned the

Maccabees; the cli. Psalm; the Appendix to Job; and the Preface to Lamentations.

Both these classes of books, all denominations of Protestants consider Apocryphal; but as the English church, in her Liturgy, directs, that certain lessons shall be read from the former, for the instruction of the people, but not for confirmation of doctrine, they are retained in the larger copies of the English Bible, but are not mingled with the Canonical books, as in the Vulgate, but placed at the end of the Old Testament, under the title of, APOCRYPHA. It is certainly to be regretted, that these books are permitted to be included in the same volume, which contains the LIVELY ORACLES;—THE WORD OF GOD;—THE HOLY SCRIPTURES; all of which were given by inspiration: and more to be regretted still, that they should be read in the church, promiscuously with the lessons taken from the canonical books; especially as no notice is given to the people, that what is

First and Second: for both these books have been ascribed to Ezra as their author; but these are not included in the list of Canonical books, sanctioned by the Council of Trent, and therefore they do not come into controversy. Indeed, the Second of these books is not found even in the Greek, but only in the Latin Vulgate, and is so replete with fables and false statements, that it has never been esteemed of any value. They are both however retained in our larger English Bibles; and are honoured with the foremost place, in the order of the Apocryphal books.

read from these books is Apocryphal; and as, in the Prayer Book of the Episcopal church the tables which refer to the lessons to be read, have this title prefixed; *Tables of lessons of Holy Scripture to be read at morning and evening prayer throughout the year.* Now, however good and instructive these Apocryphal lessons may be, it never can be justified, that they should thus be put on a level with the word of God.*

But it is our object, at present, to show, that none of these books, *Canonized* by the council of Trent, and inserted in our larger English Bibles, are Canonical.

1. The first argument by which it may be proved that these books do not belong to the Canon of the Old Testament, is, that they are not found in the Hebrew Bible. They are not written in the Hebrew language, but in the Greek, which was not known to the Jews, until long after inspiration had ceased, and the Canon of the Old Testament was closed. It is rendered probable, indeed, that some of them were written originally in the Chaldaic; Jerome testifies this to be the fact, in regard to 1. *Maccabees, and Ecclesiasticus;* and he says, that he translated the book of *Tobit,* out of Chaldee into Latin; but this book is now found in the Greek, and there is good reason for believing, that it was

* See TABLES prefixed to the Book of COMMON PRAYER; also THE SIXTH ARTICLE of Religion, of the Episcopal Church.

written originally, in this language. It is certain, however, that none of these books were composed in the pure Hebrew of the Old Testament.

Hottinger, indeed, informs us, that he had seen the whole of the Apocrypha in pure Hebrew, among the Jews; but he entertains no doubt, that it was translated into that language, in modern times: just as the whole New Testament has recently been translated into pure Hebrew.

It is the common opinion of the Jews, and of the Christian Fathers, that MALACHI was the last of the Old Testament prophets. Books written by uncertain authors, afterwards, have no claim to be reckoned Canonical; and there is good reason for believing, that those books were written long after the time of Ezra and Malachi; and some of them, perhaps, later than the commencement of the Christian era.

2. These books, though probably written by Jews, have never been received into the Canon, by that people. In this, the ancient and modern Jews are of the same mind. Josephus declares, "That no more than twenty two books were received as inspired by his nation." Philo who refers often to the Old Testament, in his writings, never makes the least mention of them; nor are they recognized in the Talmud, as Canonical. Not only so, but the Jewish Rabbies expressly reject them. RABBI AZARIAH, speaking of these books, says, "They are received by Christians, not by us."

R. GEDALIAH, after giving a catalogue of the books of the Old Testament with some account of their authors, adds these words, "It is worth while to know that the nations of the world wrote many other books, which are included in their system of sacred books, but are not in our hands." To which he adds, "They say that some of these are found in the Chaldee; some in the Arabic;' and some in the Greek language."

R. AZARIAH ascribes the book called, THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON, to Philo; and R. GEDALIAH in speaking of the same book says, "That if Solomon ever wrote it, it must have been in the Syriac language, to send it to some of the kings in the remotest parts of the East." "But," says he, "Ezra put his hand only to those books which were published by the prophets, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and written in the sacred language; and our wise men prudently and deliberately resolved, to sanction none but such as were established and confirmed by him."

"This book," says he, "the Gentiles (i. e. Christians) have added to their Bible."

"Their wise men," says Buxtorf, "pronounced this book to be Apocryphal."

The book called ECCLESIASTICUS, said to be written by THE SON OF SIRACH, is expressly numbered among Apocryphal books, in the Talmud. "In the book of the Son of Sirach, it is forbidden to read."

MANASSEH BEN ISRAEL has this observation, "Those things which are alleged from a verse in Ecclesiasticus are nothing to the purpose, because that is an Apocryphal book." Another of their writers says, "The book of the son of Sirach is added to our twenty-four sacred books, by the Romans." This book also, they call *extraneous*, which some of the Jews prohibit to be read. With what face then can the Romanists pretend, that this book was added to the Canon, not long before the time of Josephus?

BARUCH, says one of their learned men, "is received by Christians" (i. e. Romanists) "but not by us."

Of TOBIT, it is said in ZEMACH DAVID "Know then that this book of Tobias is one of those which Christians join with the Hagiographa." A little afterwards, it is said, "Know then that Tobit which is among us in the Hebrew tongue, was translated from Latin into Hebrew, by Sebastian Munster." The same writer affirms of the history of Susannah, "That it is received by Christians, but not by us."

The Jews, in the time of Jerome, entertained no other opinion of these books, than those who came after them; for in his Preface to Daniel he informs us, "That he had heard one of the Jewish doctors deriding the history of Susannah, who said, 'it was invented by some Greek, he knew not whom.'"*

* See the Thesaurus Philologicus of Hottinger.

The same is the opinion of the Jews respecting the other books, which we call Apocryphal, as is manifest from all the copies of the Hebrew Bible, extant; for, undoubtedly, if they believed that any of these books were Canonical, they would give them a place in their sacred volume. But will any ask, what is the opinion of the Jews to us? I answer, much, on this point. The oracles of God were commited to them; and they preserved them with a religious care, until the advent of Messiah. Christ never censures them for adding to the Sacred Scriptures, nor detracting from them. Since their nation has been in dispersion, copies of the Old Testament, in Hebrew, have been scattered all over the world, so that it was impossible to produce a universal alteration in the Canon.—But it is needless to argue this point, for it is agreed by all, that these books never were received by the Jewish nation.

3. The third argument against the Canonical authority of these books, is derived from the total silence respecting them, in the New Testament. They are never quoted by Christ and his apostles. This fact, however, is disputed by the Romanists, and they even attempt to establish their right to a place in the Canon, from the citations, which they pretend have been made from these books by the apostles. They refer to Rom. xi. and Heb. xi where they allege, that Paul has cited passages from the Book of Wisdom. *For who hath known the mind of*

the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor?—For before his translation, he had this testimony that he pleased God. But both these passages are taken directly from the Canonical books of the Old Testament. The first is nearly in the words of Isaiah; and the last from the book of Genesis; their other examples are as wide of the mark as these, and need not be set down.

It has already been shown that these books were included in the volume quoted, and referred to, by Christ and his apostles, under the title of, THE SCRIPTURES, and are entirely omitted by Josephus in his account of the Sacred books. It would seem therefore, that in the time of Christ, and for some time afterwards, they were utterly unknown, or wholly disregarded.

SECTION IV.

TESTIMONIES OF THE CHRISTIAN FATHERS, AND OF OTHER LEARNED MEN DOWN TO THE TIME OF THE COUNCIL OF TRENT, RESPECTING THE APOCRYPHA.

The fourth argument, is, that these books were not received as Canonical, by the Christian Fathers, but were expressly declared to be Apocryphal.

JUSTIN MARTYR does not cite a single passage, in all his writings, from any Apocryphal book.

The first catalogue of the books of the Old Testament which we have, after the times of the apostles, from any Christian writer, is that of MELITO bishop of Sardis, before the end of the second century, which is preserved by Eusebius. The fragment is as follows, "MELITO to his brother ONESIMUS, greeting. Since you have often earnestly requested of me, in consequence of your love of learning, a collection of the Sacred Scriptures of the Law, and the Prophets, and what relates to the SAVIOUR, and concerning our whole faith; and since, moreover, you wish to obtain an accurate knowledge of our ancient books, as it respects their number, and order, I have used diligence to accomplish this, knowing your sincere affection towards the faith, and your earnest desire to become acquainted with the word: and that striving after

eternal life, your love to God induces you to prefer these to all other things. Wherefore, going into the East, and to the very place where these things were published and transacted; and having made diligent search after the books of the Old Testament, I now subjoin, and send you, the following catalogue. Five books of Moses, viz. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Four books of Kings, Two of Chronicles, The Psalms of David, The Proverbs of Solomon, (or) Wisdom,* Ecclesiastes, The Song of Songs, Job, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Twelve in one book, Daniel, Ezekiel, Ezra."†

ORIGEN also says, "We should not be ignorant, that the Canonical books are the same which the Hebrews delivered unto us, and are twenty two in number, according to the number of letters of the Hebrew alphabet." Then he sets down, in order, the names of the books, in Greek and Hebrew.

* Whether Melito, in this catalogue, by the word WISDOM, meant to designate a distinct book; or whether it was used as an other name for PROVERBS, seems doubtful. The latter has generally been understood to be the sense; and this accords with the understanding of the ancients; for Rufin, in his translation of this passage of Eusebius, renders παροιμιαι ἡ σοφια *Salomonis Proverbia, quæ est sapientia*; that is, *The Proverbs of Solomon, which is Wisdom*. PINEDA, a learned Romanist, says, "The word *Wisdom* should here be taken as explicative of the former, and should be understood to mean, *The Proverbs*."

† Euseb. Hist. Ecc. Lib. v. c. 24.

ATHANASIUS, in his Synopsis, says, "All the Scriptures of us Christians are divinely inspired; neither are they indefinite in their number, but determined, and reduced into a Canon. Those of the Old Testament are, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Four books of Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Canticles, Job. The twelve prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel."

HILARY, who was contemporary with Athanasius, and resided in France, has numbered the Canonical books of the Old Testament, in the following manner, "The five of Moses, the sixth of Joshua, the seventh of Judges including Ruth, the eighth of first and second Kings; the ninth of third and fourth Kings; the tenth of the Chronicles, two books; the eleventh, Ezra (which included Nehemiah;) the twelfth, the Psalms. Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs, the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth; the Twelve Prophets, the sixteenth; then, Isaiah and Jeremiah including Lamentations and his Epistle, Daniel, Ezekiel, Job, and Esther, making up the full number of twenty two." And in his Preface, he adds, "That these books were thus numbered by our ancestors, and handed down by tradition from them."*

GREGORY NAZIANZEN exhorts his readers to study the sacred books with attention, but to avoid

* Proleg. in Psalmos.

such as were Apocryphal; and then gives a list of the books of the Old Testament, and according to the Jewish method, makes the number TWO AND TWENTY. He complains of some, that mingled the Apocryphal books with those that were inspired "Of the truth of which last," says he, "we have the most perfect persuasion, therefore it seemed good to me, to enumerate the Canonical books, from the beginning; and those which belong to the Old Testament are two and twenty, according to the number of the Hebrew alphabet, as I have understood." Then he proceeds to say, "Let no one add to these divine books, nor take any thing away from them. I think it necessary to add this, that there are other books besides those which I have enumerated as constituting the Canon, which however do not appertain to it; but were proposed by the early Fathers, to be read for the sake of the instruction which they contain." Then, he expressly names, as belonging to this class, THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON, THE WISDOM OF SIRACH, ESTHER, JUDITH, and TOBIT.*

JEROME, in his Epistle to Paulinus, gives us a catalogue of the books of the Old Testament, exactly corresponding with that which Protestants receive. "Which," says he, "we believe agreeably to the tradition of our ancestors, to have been inspired by the Holy Spirit."

* Epist. ad Theod. and Lib. Carm.

EPIPHANIUS, in his book concerning Weights and Measures, distributes the books of the Old Testament into four divisions, of five each. "The first of which contains the Law; next, five Poetical books, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs; in the third division, he places Joshua, Judges including Ruth, First and Second Chronicles, Four books of Kings. The last five, the twelve prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel. Then there remain two, Ezra and Esther," Thus he makes up the number TWENTY-TWO.

CYRIL of Jerusalem, in his Catechism, exhorts his catechumen diligently to learn from the church, what books appertain to the Old and New Testament, and he says, "Read nothing which is Apocryphal. Read the Scriptures, namely, the TWENTY-TWO books of the Old Testament, which were translated by the Seventy-two interpreters." And in another place, "Meditate, as was said, in the twenty two books of the Old Testament, and if you wish it, I will give you their names." Here follows a catalogue, agreeing with those already given, except that he adds Baruch to the list. When Baruch is mentioned as making one book with Jeremiah, as is done by some of the Fathers, it is most reasonable to understand those parts of Jeremiah, in the writing of which, Baruch was concerned, as particularly the lii. chapter; for, if we understand them as referring to the separate book, now called Baruch, the number, which they are

so careful to preserve, will be exceeded. This Apocryphal Baruch never existed in the Hebrew, and is never mentioned separately, by any ancient author, as Bellarmine confesses. This book was originally written in Greek, but our present copies differ exceedingly from the Old Latin translation.

THE COUNCIL OF LAODICEA forbad the reading of any books in the churches, but such as were Canonical; and that the people might know what these were, a catalogue was given, answering to the Canon which we now receive.

ORIGEN barely mentions the Maccabees. ATHANASIUS takes no notice of these books. EUSEBIUS, in his Chronicon, speaks of the History of the Maccabees, and adds, "These books are not received as divine Scriptures."

PHILASTRIUS, an Italian bishop, who lived in the latter part of the fourth Century, in a work on Heresy, says "It was determined by the apostles and their successors, that nothing should be read in theCatholic church,but the LAW,PROHETS,EVANGELISTS, &c."—And he complains of certain Heretics, "That they used the book of WISDOM,by THE SON OF SIRACH, who lived long after Solomon."

CHRYSOSTOM, a man who excelled in the knowledge of the Scriptures, declares, "That all the divine books of the Old Testament were originally written in the Hebrew tongue, and that no other books were received."*

* Hom. 4. In Gen.

But JEROME, already mentioned, who had diligently studied the Hebrew Scriptures, by the aid of the best Jewish teachers, enters into this subject more fully and accurately than any of the rest of the Fathers. In his general Preface to his version of the Scriptures, he mentions the books which he had translated out of Hebrew into Latin; "All besides them," says he, "must be placed among the Apocryphal. Therefore, WISDOM, which is ascribed to Solomon, THE BOOK OF JESUS THE SON OF SIRACH, JUDITH, TOBIT, AND PASTOR, are not in the Canon. I have found the first book of Maccabees in Hebrew (Chaldee); the second in Greek, and as the style shows, it must have been composed in that language." And in his Preface to Ezra and Nehemiah, (always reckoned one book by the Jews,) he says, "Let no one be disturbed, that I have edited but one book under this name; nor let any one please himself with the dreams contained in the third and fourth Apocryphal books, ascribed to this author; for with the Hebrews, Ezra and Nehemiah make but one book; and those things not contained in this are to be rejected, as not belonging to the Canon." And in his preface to the books of Solomon, he speaks "of Wisdom, and Ecclesiasticus; the former of which" he says, "he found in Hebrew, (Chaldee) but not the latter, which is never found among the Hebrews, but the style strongly savours of the Grecian eloquence." He then adds, "As the church reads the books of Judith, Tobit, and

the Maccabees, but does not receive them among the Canonical Scriptures, so also, she may read these two books for the edification of the common people, but not as authority to confirm any of the doctrines of the church."

Again, in his Preface to Jeremiah, he says, "The book of Baruch, the scribe of Jeremiah, is not read in Hebrew, nor esteemed Canonical, therefore, I have passed it over." And in his Preface to Daniel, "This book among the Hebrews has neither THE HISTORY OF SUSANNA, NOR THE SONG OF THE THREE CHILDREN, NOR THE FABLES OF BEL AND THE DRAGON, which we have retained, lest we should appear to the unskilful to have curtailed a large part of the Sacred Volume."

In the Preface to Tobit, he says, "The Hebrews cut off the book of Tobit from the catalogue of Divine Scriptures."

And in his Preface to Judith, "Among the Hebrews, Judith is placed among the Hiagiographa which are not of authority to determine controversies."

RUFIN, in his Exposition of the Creed, observes, "That there were some books, which were not called Canonical, but received by our ancestors; as the Wisdom of Solomon, and another Wisdom of the Son of Sirach; of the same order, are the books of Tobit, Judith, and the Maccabees."

GREGORY the First, speaking of the testimony in the Maccabees respecting the death of *Eleazer*,

says, "Concerning which thing we do not act inordinately, although we bring our testimony from a book, which is not Canonical."

AUGUSTINE, is the only one among the Fathers, who lived within four hundred years after the apostles, who seems to favour the introduction of these six disputed books, into the Canon. In his work *On Christian Doctrine*, he gives a list of the books of the Old Testament, among which he inserts, Tobit, Judith, the two books of Maccabees, two of Esdras, Wisdom, and Ecclesiasticus. These two, last mentioned, he says, are called Solomon's, on account of their resemblance to his writings; although it is known, that one of them was composed by THE SON OF SIRACH: which deserves to be received among the prophetical books." But this opinion he retracted afterwards.*

AUGUSTINE was accustomed to the Greek and Latin Bibles, in which those books had been introduced, and we must suppose, unless we would make him contradict himself, that he meant in this place, merely to enumerate the books then contained in the Sacred volume; for in many other places, he clearly shews, that he entertained the same opinion of the books of the Old Testament, as the other Fathers.

In his celebrated work, OF THE CITY OF GOD, he expresses this opinion most explicitly, "In that

* See his RETRACTIONS.

It may be admitted, however, that AUGUSTINE entertained too high an opinion of these Apocryphal books, but it is certain, that he did not put them on a level with the genuine Canonical books.

He mentions a custom which prevailed in his time, from which it appears, that although the Apocryphal books were read in some of the churches, they were not read as Holy Scripture, nor put on a level with the Canonical books; for he informs us, that they were not permitted to be read from the same desk as the Canonical Scriptures, but from a lower place in the church.

INNOCENT the first, who lived about the same time, is also adduced as a witness, to prove, that these disputed books were then received into the Canon. But the Epistle which contains his catalogue is extremely suspicious. No mention is made of this Epistle by any writer for three hundred years after the death of INNOCENT. But it is no how necessary to our argument, to deny, that in the end of the fourth, and beginning of the fifth century, some individuals, and perhaps some councils, received these books as Canonical: yet there is strong evidence that this was not the opinion of the universal church; for in the council of Chalcedon, which is reckoned to be œcumenical, the Canons of the council of Laodicea which contain a catalogue of the genuine books of the Old Testament, are adopted. And it has been

shewn already, that these Apocryphal books were excluded from that catalogue.

But it can be proved, that even until the time of the meeting of the council of Trent, by which these books were solemnly *Canonized*, the most learned and judicious of the Popish writers, adhere to the opinions of JEROME and the ancients; or at least, make a marked distinction between these disputed books, and those which are acknowledged to be Canonical by all. A few testimonies from distinguished writers, from the commencement of the sixth century, down to the era of the Reformation, shall now be given.

It deserves to be particularly observed, here, that in one of the laws of the Emperor JUSTINIAN, concerning Ecclesiastical matters, it was enacted, "That the Canons of the first four general councils should be received, and have the force of laws."

ANASTASIUS, Patriarch of Antioch, in a work on the Creation, makes "The number of books which God hath appointed for his Old Testament" to be no more than twenty two; although he speaks in very high terms of Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus.

LEONTIUS, a learned and accurate writer, in his book against the SECTS, acknowledges no other Canonical books of the Old Testament, but those which the Hebrews received; namely, Twelve Historical books, Five Prophetical, Four of Doctrine and Instruction, and One of Psalms; making the

number twenty two, as usual; and he makes not the least mention of any others.

Gregory, who lived at the beginning of the seventh century, in his book of Morals, makes an apology for alleging a passage from the Maccabees, and says, "Though it be not taken from the Canonical Scripture, yet it is cited from a book which was published for the edification of the church."

Isidore, bishop of Seville, divides the Canonical books of the Old Testament into three orders, the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa; and afterwards adds; "That there is a fourth order of books, which are not in the Hebrew Canon of the Old Testament." Here he names these books, and says, "Though the Jews rejected them as Apocryphal, the church has received them among the Canonical Scriptures."

John Damascene, a Syrian Presbyter, who lived early in the eighth century, adheres to the Hebrew Canon of the Old Testament, numbering only two and twenty books. Of Maccabees, Judith, and Tobit, he says not one word; but he speaks "Of Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus, as elegant and virtuous writings, yet not to be numbered among the Canonical books of Scripture, being never laid up in the ark of the Covenant."

Venerable Bede follows the ancient method of dividing the books of the Old Testament into three classes; but he remarkably distinguishes the Maccabees from the Canonical books, by classing them

with the writings of Josephus, and Julius the African.

ALCUIN, the disciple of *Bede*, says, "That the book of the son of Sirach was reputed an Apocryphal and dubious Scripture."

RUPERT, a learned man of the twelfth century, expressly rejects the book of Wisdom, from the Canon.

PETER MAURITIUS, after giving a catalogue of the authentic Scriptures of the Old Testament, adds the six disputed books, and says, "They are useful and commendable in the church, but are not to be placed in the same dignity with the rest."

HUGO DE S. VICTORE, a Saxon by birth, but who resided at Paris, gives a catalogue of the books of the Old Testament, which includes no others but the two and twenty received from the Jews; and of Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Tobit, and Judith, he says, "They are used in the church, but not written in the Canon."

RICHARD DE S. VICTORE, also of the twelfth century, in his Books of Collections, explicitly declares, "That there are but twenty two books in the Canon; and that Wisdom Ecclesiasticus, Tobit, Judith, and the Maccabees are not esteemed Canonical, although they are read in the churches."

PETER LOMBARD, in his Scholastic History, enumerates the books of the Old Testament, thus; Five books of Moses, eight of the prophets, and nine of the Hagiographa, which leaves no r

for these six disputed books; but in his Preface to Tobit, he says expressly, "That it is in no order of the Canon;" and of Judith, "that Jerome, and the Hebrews, place it in the Apocrypha." Moreover, he calls the story of Bel and the Dragon, a fable; and says, that the History of Susanna, is not as true as it should be.

In this century, also, lived JOHN OF SALISBURY, an Englishman, a man highly respected, in his time. In one of his Epistles, he treats this subject at large, and professes to follow Jerome, and undoubtedly to believe, that there are but twenty two books in the Canon of the Old Testament, all which he names in order, and adds, "That neither the book of Wisdom, nor Ecclesiasticus, nor Judith, nor Tobit, nor the Pastor, nor the Maccabees, are esteemed Canonical."

In the thirteenth century, the opinion of the learned was the same, as we may see, by the ORDINARY GLOSS on the Bible, in the composition of which, many persons were concerned, and which was highly approved by all the doctors and pastors in the Western churches. In the Preface to this GLOSS, they are reproached with ignorance, who hold all the books put into the one volume of Scripture, in equal veneration. The difference between these books is asserted to be as great as between *certain*, and *doubtful* works. The Canonical books are declared, "To have been written by the inspiration of the Holy

Ghost; but who were the authors of the others, is unknown." Then it is declared; "That the church permitteth the reading of the Apocryphal books, for devotion and instruction, but not for authority to decide matters of controversy in faith. And that there are no more than twenty two Canonical books of the Old Testament, and all besides are Apocryphal." Thus we have the common judgment of the church, in the thirteenth century, in direct opposition to the decree of the council of Trent, in the sixteenth. But this is not all, for when the writers of this GLOSS come to the Apocryphal books, they prefix a caution, as: "Here begins the book of Tobit, which is not in the Canon;"—"Here begins the book of Judith, which is not in the Canon," and so of every one of them: and to confirm their opinion they appeal to the Fathers.

HUGO, the cardinal, who lived in this century, wrote commentaries, on all the Scriptures, which were universally esteemed; in these, he constantly keeps up the distinction between the Canonical, and Ecclesiastical books; and he explicitly declares that "Ecclesiasticus, Wisdom, Judith, Tobit, and the Maccabees, are Apocryphal;—dubious;—not Canonical;—not received by the church for proving any matters of faith, but for information of manners."

THOMAS AQUINAS, also, the most famous of the schoolmen, makes the same distinction between

these classes of books. He maintains, that the book of Wisdom was not held to be a part of the Canon, and ascribes it to Philo. The story of Bel and the Dragon, he calls a fable; and he shows clearly enough, that he did not believe that Ecclesiasticus was of Canonical authority.

In the fourteenth century, no man acquired so extensive a reputation, for his commentaries on the Bible as, NICHOLAS LYRA, a converted Jew. In his Preface to the book of Tobit, he says, "That having commented on all the Canonical books, from the beginning of Genesis, to the end of Revelation, his intention now was, to write on those books which are not Canonical." Here he enumerates, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Judith, Tobit, and the Maccabees; and then adds, "The Canonical books are not only before these in time, but in dignity and authority"—And again, "These are not in the Canon, but received by the church to be read for instruction in manners, not to be used for deciding controversies respecting the faith; whereas the others are of such authority, that whatever they contain is to be held as undoubted truth;"

The Englishman, WILLIAM OCCAM, of Oxford, accounted the most learned doctor of his age, in his DIALOGUES, acknowledges, "That, that honour is due only to the divine writers of Scripture, that we should esteem them free from all error." Moreover in his PROLOGUES, he fully assents to the opinion of Jerome and Gregory, "That neither Ju-

dith, nor Tobit, nor the Maccabees, nor Wisdom, nor Ecclesiasticus, are to be received into the same place of honour, as the inspired books; for," says he, "The church doth not number them among the Canonical Scriptures."

In the fifteenth century, THOMAS ANGLICUS, sometimes called *the angelical doctor*, on account of his excellent judgment, numbers twenty four books of the Old Testament, if Ruth be reckoned separately from Judges, and Lamentations from Jeremiah.

PAUL BURGENSIS, a Spanish Jew, who, after his conversion to Christianity, on account of his superior knowledge and piety, was advanced to be bishop of Burgos, wrote Notes on the Bible, in which he retains the same distinction of books, which has been so often mentioned.

The Romanists have at last, as they suppose, found an authority for these disputed books, in THE COUNCIL OF FLORENCE; from the Acts of which, they produce a decree, in which the Six disputed books are named, and expressly said to be written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

If this Canon were genuine, the authority of a council sitting in such circumstances, as attended the meeting of this, would have very little weight; but Dr. Cosins has shewn, that in the large copies of the Acts of this council, no such decree can be found; and that it has been foisted into the abridg-

ment, by some impostor, who omitted something else, to make room for it; and thus preserved the number of Canons unchanged, while the substance of them was altered.

Alphonso Tostatus, bishop of Avila, who, on account of his extraordinary learning, was called the wonder of the world, has given a clear and decisive testimony on this subject. This learned man declares, "That these controverted books were not Canonical, and that the church condemned no man for disobedience, who did not receive them as the other Scriptures; because they were of uncertain origin; and it is not known that they were written by inspiration. And again, "because the church is uncertain, whether heretics have not added to them." This opinion he repeats in several parts of his works.

Cardinal Ximenes, the celebrated editor of the Complutensian Polyglot, in the preface to that work, admonishes the reader, that Judith, Tobit, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Maccabees, with the Additions to Esther and Daniel, which are found in the Greek, are not Canonical Scripture.

John Picus, the learned count of Mirandula, adhered firmly to the opinion of Jerome and the other Fathers, on the subject of the Canon.

Faber Stapulensis, a famous doctor of Paris, acknowledges that these books are not in the Canon.

Ludovicus Vives, one of the most learned men

of his age, in his commentaries on AUGUSTINE's CITY OF GOD, rejects the third and fourth books of Esdras, and also the History of Susannah, and Bel, as Apocryphal. He speaks also in such a manner of Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus as to shew, that he did not esteem them Canonical; for, he makes Philo to be the author of the former, and the Son of Sirach of the latter, who lived in the time of Ptolemy, about an hundred years after the last of the Prophets; and of the Maccabees, he doubts, whether Josephus was the author or not; by which, he sufficiently shews, that he did not believe, that they were written by inspiration.

But there was no man in this age who obtained so high a reputation for learning and critical skill, as ERASMUS. In his exposition of the Apostle's Creed and the Decalogue, he discusses this question respecting the Canonical books; and after enumerating the usual books of the Old Testament, he says, "The ancient Fathers admitted no more;" but of the other books, afterwards received into Ecclesiastical use, (naming the whole which we esteem Apocryphal,) "it is uncertain what authority should be allowed to them; but the Canonical Scriptures are such, as without controversy, are believed to have been written by the inspiration of God." And in his *Scholia* on Jerome's Preface to Daniel, he expresses his wonder, that such stories as Bel and the Dragon, should be publicly read in the churches. In his address to students of the

Scriptures, he admonishes them to consider well, "That the church never intended to give the same authority to Tobit, Judith, and Wisdom, which is given to the Five Books of Moses, or the Four Evangelists."

The last testimony which we shall adduce, to shew, that these books were not universally, nor commonly received, until the very time of the Council of Trent, is that of Cardinal CAJETAN, the oracle of the church of Rome. In his commentaries on the Bible, he gives us this, as the rule of the church. "That those books which were Canonical with Jerome, should be so with us; and that those which were not received as Canonical by him, should be considered as excluded by us." And he says, "The Church is much indebted to this Father for distinguishing between the books which are Canonical, and those which are not, for thus he has freed us from the reproach of the Hebrews, who otherwise might say, that we had framed a new Canon for ourselves." For this reason, he would write no commentaries on these Apocryphal books, for, says he, "Judith, Tobit, Maccabees, Wisdom, and the Additions to Esther, are all excluded from the Canon, as insufficient to prove any matter of faith, though they may be read for the edifying of the people."

From the copious citations of testimonies which we have given, it is evident, that the books in dispute, are Apocryphal, and have no right to a place

in the Canon; and that the council of Trent acted unwisely, in decreeing, with an anathema annexed, that they should be received as divine. Surely no council can make that an inspired book, which was not written by inspiration. Certainly these books did not belong to the Canon while the apostles lived, for they were unknown both to Jews and Christians. Sixtus Sinensis, a distinguished Romanist, acknowledges, that it was long after the time of the apostles, that these writings came to the knowledge of the whole Christian church. But while this is conceded, it does not terminate the controversy, for among the many extraordinary claims of the Romanist church, one of the most extraordinary is, the authority to add to the Canon of Holy Scripture. It has been made sufficiently manifest, that these Apocryphal books were not included in the Canon during the first three centuries; and can it be doubted whether the Canon was fully constituted before the fourth century? To suppose, that the Pope, or a Council, can make what books they please Canonical, is too absurd to deserve a moment's consideration. If, upon this principle they could render Tobit and Judith Canonical, upon the same, they might introduce Herodotus, Livy, or even the Koran itself.

SECTION V.

INTERNAL EVIDENCE THAT THESE BOOKS ARE NOT CANONICAL—THE WRITERS NOT PROPHETS, AND DO NOT CLAIM TO BE INSPIRED.

I come now to the fifth argument to disprove the Canonical authority of these books, which is derived from internal evidence. Books which contain manifest falsehoods; or which abound in silly and ridiculous stories; or contradict the plain and uniform doctrine of acknowledged Scripture, cannot be Canonical. Now I will endeavour to show, that the books in dispute, are all, or most of them, condemned by this rule.

In the book of Tobit, an angel of God is made to tell a palpable falsehood, *I am Azarias, the son of Ananias the great, and of thy bretheren.** By which Tobit was completely deceived, for he says, *Thou art of an honest and good stock.* Now in chapter xii, this same angel declares, *I am Raphael, one of the seven Holy Angels, which present the prayers of the saints, and go in and out before the glory of the Holy One.*

Judith is represented as speaking scarcely any thing but falsehood to Holofornes; but what is most inconsistent with the character of piety given

* Tobit v. 12.

her, is, that she is made to pray to the God of Truth, in the following words, *Smite by the deceit of my lips, the servant with the prince and the prince with the servant*: who does not perceive, at once, the impiety of this prayer? It is a petition, that He who holds in utter detestation all falsehood, should give efficacy to premeditated deceit.

This woman, so celebrated for her piety, is also made to speak with commendation of the conduct of Simeon, in the cruel slaughter of the Shechemites; an act, against which God, in the Scriptures, has expressed his high displeasure. In the second book of Maccabees, RAZIS, an Elder of Jerusalem, is spoken of with high commendation, for destroying his own life rather than fall into the hands of his enemies; but certainly suicide is not, in any case, agreeable to the word of God.

The author of the book of Wisdom, speaks in the name of Solomon, and talks about being appointed to build a temple in the holy mountain; whereas it has been proved by Jerome, that this book is falsely ascribed to Solomon.

In the book of Tobit, we have this story; *And as they went on their journey they came to the river Tigris, and they lodged there, and when the young man went down to wash himself, a fish leaped out of the river, and would have drowned him. Then the angel said unto him, take the fish. And the young man laid hold of the fish*

and drew it to land. To whom the angel said, open the fish, and take the heart, and the liver, and the gall, and put them up safely. So the young man did as the angel commanded him, and when they had roasted the fish, they did eat it. Then the young man said unto the angel, brother Azarias, to what use is the heart and the liver and the gall of the fish? And he said unto him, touching the heart and the liver, if a devil, or an evil spirit trouble any, we must make a smoke thereof before the man or the woman, and the party shall be no more vexed. As for the gall, it is good to anoint a man that hath whiteness in his eyes; he shall be healed. If this story does not savour of the fabulous, then it would be difficult to find any thing that did.

In the book of Baruch, there are also several things which do not appear to be true. Baruch is said to have read this book, in the fifth year after the destruction of Jerusalem, in the ears of Jeremiah, the king, and all the people dwelling in Babylon, who upon hearing it, collected money and sent it to Jerusalem, to the priests. Now Baruch, who is here alleged to have read this book in Babylon, is said, in the Canonical Scriptures, to have been carried captive into Egypt, with Jeremiah, after the murder of Gedaliah. Again, he is represented to have read in the ears of Jeconias the king, and of all

Tobit. c. vi. Baruch. i. Jeremiah. xl.

the people; but Jeconias is known to have been shut up in prison, at this time, and it is no how probable that Baruch would have access to him, if he even had been in Babylon. The money that was sent from Babylon was to enable the priests to offer sacrifices to the Lord, but the temple was in ruins and there was no altar.*

In the chapters added to the book of Esther, we read, that *Mordocheus, in the second year of Artaxerxes the great, was a great man, being a servitor in the king's court.* And in the same, *That he was also one of the captives which Nabuchodonosor carried from Jerusalem, with Jeconias king of Judea.* Now, between these two periods, there intervened one hundred and fifty years; so that, if he was only fifteen years of age, when caried away, he must have been a servitor in the king's court, at the age of one hundred and seventy five years!

Again, *Mordocheus* is represented as being *a great man in the court, in the second year of Artaxerxes,* before he detected the conspiracy against the king's life. Now Artaxerxes and Ahasuerus were the same, or they were not; if the former, this history clashes with the Scriptural account, for there it appears, that Mordecai, was not, before

* Barach, i. 10. *And they said behold we have sent you money to buy you burnt offerings, and incense, and prepare ye manna, and offer upon the altar of the Lord our God.*

this time, a courtier, or a conspicuous man; if the latter, then this addition is manifestly false, because it ascribes to Artaxerxes, what the Scriptures ascribe to another person.

Moreover, this Apocryphal writing places the conspiracy against the king's life before the repudiation of Vashti and the marriage of Esther, but this is repugnant to the Canonical Scriptures.

It is also asserted, in this book, that Mordocheus received honors and rewards for the detection of the conspiracy; whereas, in the Canonical book of Esther, it is declared, that he received no reward. And a different reason is assigned, in the two books, for Haman's hatred of *Mordecai*. In the Canonical, it is his neglect of shewing respect to this proud courtier; in the Apocryphal, it is the punishment of the two Eunuchs, who had formed the conspiracy.

And finally, Haman, in this spurious work, is called a *Macedonian*; and it is said, that he meditated the design of transferring the Persian kingdom to the Macedonians. But this is utterly incredible. The kingdom of Macedon must have been, at that time, most obscure, and probably wholly unknown, at the Persian Court. But this is not all, he who is here called a Macedonian, is in the Canonical book said to be an *Agagite*.* The proof of the Apocryphal character of this

* See chap. xvi.

Addition to Esther, which has been adduced, is in all reason sufficient.

The advocates of these books are greatly perplexed to find a place in the history of the Jewish nation, for the wonderful deliverance, wrought by means of Judith. It seems strange that no allusion is made to this event in any of the acknowledged books of Scripture; and more unaccountable still, that Josephus, who was so much disposed to relate every thing favourable to the character of his nation, should never make the least mention of it. Some refer this history to the period preceding the Babylonish captivity; while others are of opinion, that the events occurred in the time of Cambyses, king of Persia. But the name of the High Priest, here mentioned, does not occur with the names of the High Priests contained in any of the genealogies. From the time of the building of the temple by Solomon, to its overthrow by the Assyrians, this name is not found in the list of High Priests, as may be seen, by consulting the vi. chapter of 1Chronicles; nor, in the catalogue given by Josephus, in the tenth chapter of the tenth book of his Antiquities. That this history cannot be placed after the captivity, is manifest, from this circumstance, that the temple of Solomon was still standing when the transactions which are related in this book, occurred.

Another thing in the book of *Judith*, which is very suspicious, is, that Holofernes is represented

as saying, *Tell me now, ye Sons of Canaan, who this people is, that dwelleth in the hill country, and what are the cities that they inhabit.* But how can it be reconciled with known history, that a prince of Persia should be wholly ignorant of the Jewish people?

It is impossible to reconcile what is said, in the close of the book, with any sound principles of chronology. Judith is reprsented as young and beautiful, when she slew Holofernes; but here it is said, *That she waxed old in her husband's house, being an hundred and five years old. And there was none that made the children of Israel any more afraid, in the days of Judith; nor a long time after her death.* In whose reign, or at what period, we would ask, did the Jews enjoy this long season of uninterrupted tranquillity?

Some writers who are fully convinced that the history of Judith cannot be reconciled with authentic history, if taken literally, are of opinion, that it contains a beautiful allegory;—that BETHULIA, (*the virgin,*) represents the church of God; that the assault of Nebuchadnezzar signifies, the opposition of the world and its prince; that the victory obtained by a pious woman, is intended to teach, that the church's deliverance is not effected by human might or power, but by the prayers and the piety of the saints &c. This, perhaps, is the most favourable view which we can take of this history; but take it as you will, it is clear that the book is

Apocryphal, and has no right to a place in the Sacred Canon.

Between the first and second books of Maccabees, there is a palpable contradiction; for in the first book it is said, that *Judas died in the one hundred and fifty second year:* but in the second, *that in the one hundred and eighty eighth year, the people that were in Judea, and Judas, and the council, sent greeting and health unto Aristobulus.* Thus, Judas, is made to join in sending a letter six and thirty years after his death! The contradiction is manifest. In the the same first chapter of the second book, there is a story inserted, which has very much the air of a fable. *For when our Fathers were led into Persia, the priests that were then devout, took the fire of the altar privily and hid it in a hollow place of a pit without water, where they kept it sure, so that the place was unknown to all men. Now after many years, when it pleased God, Nehemias, being sent from the king of Persia, did send of the posterity of those priests that had hid it, to the fire: but when they told us they found no fire, but thick water: then commanded he them to draw it up and bring it, and when the sacrifices were laid on, Nehemias commanded the priests to sprinkle the wood and things laid thereon, with the water. When this was done and the time came that the Sun shone, which before was hid in the clouds, a great fire*

was kindled. But the Jews were not carried to Persia but to Babylon, and the rest of the story has no foundation, whatever, in truth.

In the second chapter we have another fabulous story of Jeremiah's taking the ark and altar, and altar of incense, to mount Pisgah, and hiding them in a hollow cave, and closing them up. This place Jeremiah declared should be unknown, *Until the time that God gathered his people again together, and received them into mercy. When the cloud as it appeared unto Moses, shall appear again.*

There is another contradiction between these books of Maccabees, in relation to the death of Antiochus Epiphanes. In the first it is said, that he died at Elymais, in Persia, in the hundred and forty ninth year; but in the second book, it is related, that after entering Persepolis, with a view of overthrowing the temple and city, he was repulsed by the inhabitants; and while on his journey from this place, he was seized with a dreadful disease of the bowels, and died in the mountains.

Moreover, the accounts given of Nicanor, in the seventh chapter of the first book, and in the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters of the second book, are totally inconsistent.

In the first book of Maccabees an erroneous account is given of the civil government of

2 Mac. ix. 1 Mac. viii. 16.

the Romans, where it is said, *That they committed their government to one man every year, who ruled over all their country, and that all were obedient to that one.* Whereas, it is well known that no such form of government ever existed among the Romans

6. Finally, it is manifest that these books were not inspired, and therefore not Canonical, because they were not written by prophets; but by men who speak of their labours in a way wholly incompatible with inspiration.

Jerome and Eusebius were of opinion, that Josephus was the author of the books of the Maccabees; but it has never been supposed by any, that he was an inspired man; therefore if this opinion be correct, these books are no more Canonical, than the Antiquities or Wars of the Jews, by the same author.

It has been the constant tradition of Jews and Christians, that the spirit of prophecy ceased with Malachi, until the appearance of John the Baptist. Malachi has, on this account, been called by the Jews, THE SEAL OF THE PROPHETS.

Josephus, in his book against APION, after saying, that it belonged to the prophets alone, to write inspired books, adds these words, "From the time of Artaxerxes, there were some among us, who wrote books even to our own times, but these are not of equal authority with the preceding, because the succession of prophets was not complete."

Eusebius, in giving a catalogue of the leaders of the Jews, denies that he can proceed any lower than Zerubbabel, "Because," says he, "after the return from captivity untill the advent of our Saviour, there is no book which can be esteemed sacred."

Augustine gives a similar testimony. "After Malachi the Jews had no prophet, during that whole period which intervened between the return from captivity and the advent of our Saviour."

Neither does Genebrard dissent from this opinion, "From Malachi to John the Baptist," says he, "no prophets existed."

Drusius cites the following words, from the Compiler of Jewish History, "The rest of the discourses of Simon, and his wars, and the wars of his brother, are they not written in the book of Joseph, the Son of Gorion, and in the book of the Asmoneans, and in the books of the Roman kings." Here, the books of the Maccabees, are placed between the writings of Josephus and the Roman history.

The book of Wisdom does indeed claim to be the work of Solomon, an inspired man; but this claim furnishes the strongest ground for its condemnation. It is capable of the clearest proof, from internal evidence, that this was the production of some person, probably a Helenistic jew, who lived long after the Canon of the Old Testament was completed. It contains manifest allusions to Grecian cus-

toms, and is tinctured with the Grecian philosophy. The manner in which the author praises himself is fulsome, and has no parallel in any inspired writer. This book has been ascribed to Philo Judæus ; if this conjecture be correct, doubtless it has no just claim to be considered a Canonical book. But whoever was the author, his endeavouring to pass his composition off for a writing of Solomon, is sufficient to decide every question respecting his inspiration. If Solomon had written this book, it would have been found in the Jewish Canon, and in the Hebrew anguage. The writer is also guilty of shameful flattery to his own nation, which is entirely repugnant to the spirit of all the prophets. He has also, without any foundation, added many things to the sacred narration, contained in the Canonical history ; and has mingled with it, much, which is of the nature of poetical embellishment. And, indeed, the whole style of the composition, savours too much of artificial eloquence, to be attributed to the Spirit of God ; the constant characteristic of whose productions are, simplicity and sublimity.

Ecclesiasticus, which is superior to all the other Apocryphal books, was written by one Jesus the son of Sirach. His grandfather, of the same name, it seems, had written a book, which he left to his son Sirach ; and he delivered it to his son Jesus, who took great pains to reduce

it into order; but he no where assumes the character of a prophet himself, nor does he claim it for the original author, his grandfather. In the prologue, he says, *My grandfather Jesus, when he had much given himself to the reading of the Law and the prophets, and other books of our fathers, and had gotten therein good judgment, was drawn on also himself to write something pertaining to learning and wisdom, to the intent that those which are desirous to learn, and are addicted to these things, might profit much more, in living according to the Law. Wherefore let me intreat you to read it with favour and attention, and to pardon us, wherein we may seem to come short of some words which we have laboured to interpret. Farther, some things uttered in Hebrew, and translated into another tongue, have not the same force in them.—From the eight and thirtieth year, coming into Egypt when Euergetes was king, and continuing there for some time, I found a book of no small learning: therefore I thought it most necessary for me to bestow some diligence and travail to interpret it; using great watchfulness; and skill, in that space to bring the book to an end,* &c. Surely, there is no need of further arguments to prove, that this modest author did not claim to be inspired.

The author of the second book of the Maccabees professes to have reduced a work of *Jason of Cyrene*, consisting of five volumes, into one volume.

Concerning which work he says, *Therefore to us that have taken upon us this painful labour of abridging, it was not easy, but a matter of sweat and watching.* Again, *Leaving to the author, the exact handling of every particular, and laboring to follow the rules of an abridgment. To stand upon every point and go over things at large, and to be curious in particulars, belongeth to the first author of the story; but to use brevity and avoid much labouring of the work, is to be granted to him that maketh an abridgment.* Is any thing more needed to prove, that this writer did not profess to be inspired? If there was any inspiration in the case, it must be attributed to Jason of Cyrene, the original writer of the history; but his work is long since lost; and we now possess only the abridgment which cost the writer so much labour and pains. Thus, I think it sufficiently appears, that the authors of these disputed books, were not prophets; and that, as far as we can ascertain the circumstances in which they wrote they did not lay claim to inspiration, but expressed themselves in such a way, as no man under the influence of inspiration, ever did.

The Popish writers, to evade the force of the arguments of their adversaries, pretend, that there was a twofold Canon; that some of the books of Scripture are *protocanonical;* and others *deuterocanonical.* If, by this distinction, they only meant that the word *canon* was often used by the

Fathers, with great latitude, so as to include all books that were ever read in the churches, or that were contained in the volume of the Greek Bible, the distinction is correct, and signifies the same, as is often expressed, by calling some books, Sacred and Canonical, and others, *Ecclesiastical*. But these writers make it manifest, that they mean much more than this. They wish to put their *deuterocanonical* books, on a level with the old Jewish Canon; and this distinction is intended to teach, that after the first Canon was constituted, other books were, from time to time, added: but when these books thus annexed to the Canon have been pronounced upon by the competent authority, they are to be received as of equal authority with the former. When this second Canon was constituted, is a matter concerning which they are not agreed; some pretend, that in the time of *Shamnai* and *Hillel*, two famous rabbies, who lived before the advent of the Saviour, these books were added to the Canon. But why then are they not included in the Hebrew Canon? Why does Josephus never mention them? Why are they never quoted nor alluded to, in the New Testament? And why did all the earlier Fathers omit to cite them; or, expressly reject them? The difficulties of this theory being too prominent, the most of the advocates of the Apocrypha, suppose, that these books, after having remained in doubt before, were received by the Supreme authority

of the church, in the fourth century. They allege, that these books were sanctioned by the council of Nice, and by the third council of Carthage, which met A. D. 397. But the story of the method pursued by the council of Nice, to distinguish between Canonical and spurious books, is fabulous and ridiculous. There is nothing in the Canons of that council relative to these books; and certainly they cited no authorities from them, in confirmation of the doctrines established by them. And as to the third council of Carthage, it may be asked, what authority had this provincial synod to determine any thing for the whole church, respecting the Canon. But there is no certainty that this council did determine any thing on the subject; for in the same Canon, there is mention made of Pope Boniface, as living at that time, whereas he did not rise to this dignity, until more than twenty years afterwards; in which time, three other popes occupied the see of Rome; so that this Canon could not have been formed by the third Council of Carthage. And in some copies it is inserted, as the fourteenth of the seventh council of Carthage. However this may be, we may be confident, that no Council of the fourth century had any authority to add to the Canon of Scripture, books which were not only not received before, but explicitly rejected as apocryphal, by most of the Fathers. Our opponents say, that these books were uncertain before, but now received confirmation. How could there be

any uncertainty, in regard to these books, if the church was as infallible, in the first three ages, as in the fourth. These books were either Canonical before the fourth century, or they were not: if the former, how came it to pass they were not recognized by the apostles? How came they to be overlooked and rejected by the primitive Fathers? But if they were not canonical before, they must have been made Canonical by the decree of some Council. That is, the church can make that an inspired book, which was never given by inspiration. This absurdity was before mentioned, but it deserves to be repeated, because however unreasonable it may be, it forms the true, and almost the only ground, on which the doctrine of the Romish church, in regard to these Apocryphal books, rests. This is, indeed, a part of the Pope's supremacy. Some of their best writers, however, deny this doctrine; and whatever others may pretend, it is most certain, that the Fathers, with one consent believed, that the Canon of Sacred Scripture was complete in their time: they never dreamed of books not then Canonical, becoming such, by any authority upon earth. Indeed, the idea of adding to the Canon what did not, from the beginning, belong to it, never seems to have entered the mind of any person, in former times. If this doctrine were correct, we might still have additions made to the Canon, and that too, of books which have existed for hundreds of years.

This question may be brought to a speedy issue, with all unprejudiced judges. These books were either written by divine inspiration for the guidance of the church in matters of faith and practice, or they were not; if the former, they always had a right to a place in the Canon; if the latter, no act of a Pope or Council could render that divine, which was not so before. It would be to change the nature of a fact, than which nothing is more impossible.

It is alleged, with much confidence, that the Greek Bibles, used by the Fathers, contained these books; and, therefore, whenever they give their testimony to the Sacred Scriptures, these are included. This argument proves too much, for the third book of Esdras and the prayer of Manasses were contained in these volumes, but these are rejected by the Romanists. The truth, however, is, that these books were not originally connected with the Septuagint; they were probably introduced into some of the later Greek versions, which were made by heretics. These versions, particularly that of *Theodotion*, came to be used promiscuously with that of the LXX; and to this day, the common copies contain the version of the book of Daniel by Theodotion, instead of that by the LXX.

By some such means, these Apocryphal books crept into the Greek Bible; but the early Fathers were careful to distinguish between them and the Canonical Scriptures, as we have already seen.

That they were read in the churches is also true; but not as Scripture; not for the confirmation of doctrine; but for the edification of the common people.

Some of the Fathers, it is true, cited them as authority, but very seldom, and the reason which rendered it difficult for them to distinguish accurately between Ecclesiastical and Canonical books has already been given. These pious men were generally unacquainted with Hebrew literature, and finding all these books in Greek, and frequently bound up in the same volume, as the Canonical Scriptures; and observing that they contained excellent rules for the direction of life and the regulation of morals, they sometimes referred to them, and cited passages from them, and permitted them to be read in the church, for the instruction and edification of the people.

But the more learned of the Fathers, who examined into the authority of the sacred books with unceasing diligence, clearly marked the distinction between such books as were Canonical, and such as were merely human compositions. And some of them even disapproved of the reading of these Apocryphal books by the people; and some councils warned the churches against them. It was with this single view that so many catalogues of the Canonical books were prepared, and published.

Notwithstanding that we have taken so much pains to shew that the books called, Apocrypha, are no

Canonical, we wish to avoid the opposite extreme of regarding them as useless, or injurious. Some of these books are important for the historical information which they contain; and, especially, as the facts recorded in them are, in some instances, the fulfilment of remarkable prophecies.

Others of them are replete with sacred, moral, and prudential maxims, very useful to aid, in the regulation of life and manners; but even with these, are interspersed sentiments, which are not perfectly accordant with the word of God. In short, these books are of very different value, but in the best of them there is so much error and imperfection, as to convince us, that they are human productions, and should be used as such: not as an infallible rule, but as useful helps in the attainment of knowledge, and in the practice of virtue. Therefore, when we would exclude them from a place in the Bible, we would not proscribe them as unfit to be read; but we would have them published in a separate Volume, and studied much more carefully, than they commonly have been.

And while we would dissent from the practice of reading *lessons* from these books, as Scriptural Lessons are read in the church, we would cordially recommend the frequent perusal, in private, of the first of Maccabees, the Wisdom of Solomon, and above all, Ecclesiasticus.

It is a dishonour to God, and a disparagement of his word, to place other books, in any respect, on a le-

vel with THE DIVINE ORACLES; but it is a privilege to be permitted, to have access to the writings of men, eminent for their wisdom and piety. And it is also a matter of curious instruction to learn, what were the opinions of men, in ages long past, and in countries far remote.

SECTION VI.

NO CANONICAL BOOK OF THE OLD TESTAMENT HAS BEEN LOST.

On this subject, there has existed some diversity of opinion. Chrysostom is cited by Bellarmine, as saying, "That many of the writings of the prophets had perished, which may readily be proved, from the history in Chronicles. For the Jews were negligent; and not only negligent but impious, so that some books were lost through carelessness, and others were burned, or otherwise destroyed."

In confirmation of this opinion, an appeal is made to 1 Kings iv. 32, 33, where it is said of Solomon, *That he spake three thousand proverbs, and his songs were a thousand and five. And he spake of trees, from the cedar in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop, that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.* All these productions, it is acknowledged, have perished.

Again it is said in 1 Chron. xxix. 29, 30. *Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer. With all his reign, and his might, and the times that went*

over him, and over Israel, and over all the kingdoms of the countries. The book of Jasher, also, is twice mentioned in Scripture. In Joshua x. 13, *And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves on their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher?* And in 2 Sam. i. 18, *And he bade them teach the children of Israel the use of the bow: behold it is written in the book of Jasher.*

The book of THE WARS OF THE LORD, is referred to, in Num. xxi. 14.

But we have in the Canon no books under the name of Nathan and Gad: nor, any book of Jasher; nor, of the wars of the Lord.

Moreover, we frequently are referred, in the Sacred history, to other Chronicles or Annals, for a fuller account of the matters spoken of, which Chronicles are not now extant.

And in 2 Chron. ix. 29, it is said, *Now the rest of the Acts of Solomon, first and last, are they not written in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the visions of Iddo the seer, against Jeroboam the son of Nebat.* Now it is well known, that none of these writings of the prophets are in the Canon; at least, none of them under their names.

It is said also in 2 Chron. xii. 15, *Now the acts of Rehoboam, first and last, are they not written in the book of Shemaiah the prophet, and of Iddo the Seer, concerning genealogies?* Of which

works nothing remains, under the names of these prophets.

1. The first observation which I would make on this subject, is, that every book referred to, or quoted, in the Sacred writings, is not necessarily an inspired, or Canonical book. Because Paul cites passages from the Greek poets, it does not follow, that we must receive their poems, as inspired.

2. A book may be written by an inspired man, and yet be neither inspired nor Canonical. Inspiration was not constantly afforded to the prophets, but was occasional, and for particular, important purposes. In common matters, and especially in things no how connected with religion, it is reasonable to suppose, that the prophets and apostles were left to the same guidance of reason and common sense, as other men. A man, therefore, inspired to deliver some prophecy, or even to write a Canonical book, might write other books, with no greater assistance than other good men receive. Because Solomon was inspired, to write some Canonical books, it does not follow, that what he wrote on Natural History, was also inspired. The Scriptures, however, do not say, that his Three thousand proverbs, and his discourses on Natural History were ever committed to writing. It only says, that *he spake* these things. But supposing that all these discourses were committed to writing, which is not improbable, there is not the least reason for believing that

they were inspired; any more than Solomon's private letters to his friends, if he ever wrote any. Let it be remembered, that the prophets and apostles were only inspired on special occasions, and on particular subjects, and all difficulties respecting such works as these will vanish. How many of the books referred to in the Bible, and mentioned above, may have been of this description, it is now impossible to tell; but probably several of them belong to this class. No doubt there were many books of Annals, much more minute and particular in the narration of facts, than those which we have. It was often enough to refer to these *state papers*, or public documents, as being sufficiently correct, in regard to the facts on account of which the reference was made. There is nothing derogatory to the word of God, in the supposition, that the books of Kings and Chronicles, which we have in the Canon, were compiled by the inspired prophets from these public records. All that is necessary for us, is, that the facts are truly related; and this could be as infallibly secured on this hypothesis, as any other.

The book of THE WARS OF THE LORD, might, for ought that appears, have been merely a muster-roll of the army. The word translated *book*, has so extensive a meaning in Hebrew, that it is not even necessary to suppose, that it was a writing at all. The book of *Jasher*, (or of *Rectitude*, if we translate the word,) might have been some useful

compend taken from Scripture, or composed by the wise, for the regulation of justice and equity, between man and man.

Augustine, in his City of God, has distinguished accurately on this subject. "I think," says he, "that those books which should have authority in religion were revealed by the Holy Spirit, and that men composed others by historical diligence, as the prophets did these by inspiration. And these two classes of books are so distinct, that it is only by those written by inspiration, that we are to suppose that God, through them, is speaking unto us. The one class is useful for fulness of knowledge; the other for authority in religion; in which authority the Canon is preserved."

3. But again, it may be maintained, without any prejudice to the completeness of the Canon, that there may have been inspired writings which were not intended for the instruction of the church in all ages, but composed by the prophets for some special occasion. These writings, though inspired, were not Canonical. They were temporary in their design, and when that was accomplished, they were no longer needed. We know, that the prophets delivered, by inspiration, many discourses to the people, of which we have not a trace on record. Many true prophets are mentioned, who wrote nothing that we know of; and several are mentioned, whose names are not even given. The same is true of the apostles. Very few of them had

any concern in writing the Canonical Scriptures, and yet they all possessed plenary inspiration. And if they wrote letters, on special occasions, to the churches planted by them; yet these were not designed for the perpetual instruction of the universal church. Therefore, *Shemaiah, and Iddo, and Nathan, and Gad*, might have written some things by inspiration, which were never intended to form a part of the Sacred Volume. It is not asserted, that there certainly existed such temporary, inspired writings: all that is necessary to be maintained, is, that supposing such to have existed, which is not improbable, it does not follow that the Canon is incomplete, by reason of their loss. As this opinion may be startling to some, who have not thoroughly considered it, I will call in to its support, the opinions of some distinguished Theologians. "It has been observed," says FRANCIS JUNIUS, "that it is one thing to call a book Sacred, another to say that it is Canonical; for every book was sacred which was edited by a prophet, or apostle; but it does not follow that every such sacred book is Canonical, and was designed for the whole body of the church. For example, it is credible that Isaiah the Prophet wrote many things, as a prophet, which were truly inspired, but those writings only were Canonical, which God consecrated to the treasure of the church, and which by special direction were added to the public Canon. Thus, Paul and the other apostles, may have written ma-

ny things, by divine inspiration, which are not now extant; but those only are Canonical, which were placed in the Sacred Volume, for the use of the universal church: which Canon received the approbation of the apostles, especially, of John, who so long presided over the churches in Asia."*

The Evangelical WITSIUS, of an age somewhat later, delivers his opinion on this point, in the following manner; "No one, I think, can doubt, but that all the apostles in the diligent exercise of their office, wrote frequent letters to the churches under their care, when they could not be present with them; and to whom they might often wish to communicate some instruction necessary for them in the circumstances in which they were placed. It would seem to me to be injurious to the reputation of those faithful and assiduous men, to suppose, that not one of them ever wrote any epistle, or addressed to a church, any writing, except those few, whose Epistles are in the Canon. Now, as Peter, and Paul, and James, and John, were induced to write to the churches, on account of the need in which they stood of instruction, why would not the same necessity induce the other apostles to write to the churches under their care. Nor is there any reason why we should complain of the great loss which we have sustained, because these precious documents have perished; it is rather mat-

* Explic. In Num. xxi.

ter of gratitude, that so many have been preserved by the provident benevolence of God towards us, and so abundantly sufficient to instruct us, in the things pertaining to salvation."*

Although I have cited this passage from this excellent and orthodox theologian, in favour of the sentiment advanced; yet I do not feel at liberty to go the whole length of his opinion, here expressed. There is no reason to think, that any of the other apostles composed such works, as those which constitute the Canon of the New Testament. If they had, some of them would have been preserved; or at least, some memorial of such writings would have been handed down, in those churches to which they were addressed. These churches received and preserved the Canonical books, of those whose writings we have, and why should they neglect, or suffer to sink into oblivion, similar writings of apostles, from whom they first received the Gospel?

Indeed, after all, this argument is merely hypothetical, and would be sufficient to answer the objections which might be made, if it could be proved, that some inspired writings had perished; but, in fact, there is no proof that any such ever existed. It is, therefore, highly probable, that we are in actual possession of all the books penned under the plenary inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

* Meletem. De Vita Pauli.

4. The last remark which I shall make in relation to the books of the Old Testament supposed to be lost, is, that it is highly probable, that we have several of them now in the Canon, under another name. The books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, were, probably, not written by one, but by a succession of prophets.

There is reason to believe, that until the Canon of Sacred Scripture was closed, the succession of prophets was never interrupted. Whatever was necessary to be added, by way of explanation, to any book already received into the Canon, they were competent to annex; or, whatever annals or histories, it was the purpose of God to have transmitted to posterity, they would be directed and inspired to prepare. Thus, different parts of these books, might have been penned by *Gad, Nathan, Iddo, Shemaiah*, &c.

That some parts of these histories were prepared by prophets, we have clear proof, in one instance; for, Isaiah has inserted in his prophecy, several chapters, which are contained in 2 Kings. and which, I think, there can be no doubt, were originally written by himself *

The Jewish doctors are of opinion, that the book of Jasher, is one of the books of the Pentateuch, or the whole Law.

* See 2 Kings xviii. xix. xx. Compared with Isaiah xxxvi. xxxvii. xxxviii.

The book of the Wars of the Lord, has by many, been supposed, to be no other than the book of Numbers.

Thus I think, it sufficiently appears, from an examination of particulars, that there exists no evidence, that any Canonical book of the Old Testament has been lost. To which we may add, that there are many general considerations of great weight, which go to prove, that no part of the Scriptures of the Old Testament have been lost.

The first is, that God by his providence would preserve from destruction, books given by inspiration, and intended for the perpetual instruction of his church. It is reasonable to think, that he would not suffer his gracious purpose to be frustrated: and this argument, *a priori*, is greatly strengthened by the fact, that a remarkable providential care has been exercised, in the preservation of the Sacred Scriptures. It is truly wonderful, that so many books should have been preserved unmutilated, through hundreds and thousands of years; and during vicissitudes so great; and especially, when powerful tyrants were so desirous of annihilating the religion of the Jews, and used their utmost exertions to destroy their sacred books.

Another consideration of great weight is, the religious, and even scrupulous care, with which the Jews, as far as we can trace the history of the Sacred Scriptures, have watched over their preservation. There can, I think, be little doubt, that

they exercised the same vigilance during that period of their history, of which we have no monuments.

The translation of these books into Greek, is sufficient to show, that the same books existed, nearly two hundred years before the advent of Christ.

And above all, the unqualified testimony to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, by Christ and his Apostles, ought to satisfy us, that we have lost none of the inspired books of the Canon.

The Scriptures are constantly referred to, and quoted as infallible authority, by them, as we have before shown. These oracles were committed to the Jews as a sacred deposit, and they are never charged with unfaithfulness, in this trust. The Scriptures are declared to have been written *for our learning;* and no intimation is given that they had ever been mutilated, or in any degree corrupted.

SECTION VII.

THE ORAL LAW OF THE JEWS, WITHOUT FOUNDATION.

But however the Jews may seem to agree with us, in regard to the Canon of the Old Testament, this concord relates only to the written law; for, they obstinately persist in maintaining, that besides the law which was engraven on tables of stone; and the other precepts, and ordinances, which were communicated to Moses, and were ordered to be written, God gave unto him, *another Law*, explanatory of the first, which he was commanded not to commit to writing, but to deliver down by oral tradition.

The account which the Jewish doctors give of the first communication and subsequent delivery of this law, is found in the Talmud. It is there stated, that during the whole day, while Moses continued on the mount, he was learning the written law, but at night he was occupied in receiving the oral law.

When Moses descended from the mount, they say, that he first called Aaron into his tent, and communicated to him all that he had learned of

this oral law, then he placed him on his right hand; next he called in Eliezer and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron, and repeated the whole to them; on which they also took their seats, the one on his right hand, the other on his left. After this the seventy elders entered, and received the same instruction, as Aaron and his sons. And finally, the same communication was made to the whole multitude of people. Then Moses arose and departed, and Aaron who had now heard the whole, four times, repeated what he had learned, and also withdrew. In the same manner, Eliezer and Ithamar, each in turn, went over the same ground, and departed. And finally, the seventy elders repeated the whole to the people; every one of whom delivered what he had heard, to his neighbour. Thus, according to MAIMONIDES, was the oral law first given.

And the Jewish account of its transmission to posterity, is no less particular. They pretend, that Moses, when forty years had elapsed from the time of the Israelites leaving Egypt, called all the people, and telling them that his end drew near, requested, that if any of them had forgotten aught of what he had delivered to them, they should repair to him, and he would repeat to them anew what they might have forgotten. And they tell us, that from the first day of the eleventh month, to the sixth day of the twelfth, he was occupied in nothing else, than repeating and explaining the law to the people.

But, in a special manner, he committed this law to Joshua, by whom it was communicated, shortly before his death, to Phineas, the son of Eliezer; by Phineas, to Eli; by Eli, to Samuel; by Samuel, to David, and Ahijah; by Ahijah, to Elijah; by Elijah, to Elisha; by Elisha, to Jehoiada; by Jehoiada, to Zechariah; by Zechariah, to Hosea; by Hosea, to Amos; by Amos, to Isaiah; by Isaiah, to Micah; by Micah, to Joel; by Joel, to Nahum; by Nahum, to Habbakuk; by Habbakuk, to Zephaniah; by Zephaniah, to Jeremiah; by Jeremiah, to Baruch; by Baruch, to Ezra, the president of the great synagogue. By Ezra, this law was delivered to the high priest, Jaddua; by Jaddua, to Antigonus; by Antigonus, to Joseph son of John, and Joseph son of Jehezer; by these to Aristobulus, and Joshua the son of Perechiah; by them to Judah son of Tiboeus, and Simeon son of Satah. Thence to Shemaiah—To Hillel—To Simeon his son; supposed to have been the same who took our Saviour in his arms, in the temple, when brought thither to be presented by his parents. From Simeon, it passed to Gamaliel, the preceptor, as is supposed, of Paul. Then to Simeon his son; and finally, to the son of Simeon, JUDAH HAKKADOSH, by whom it was committed to writing.

But, although, the above list brings down an unbroken succession, from Moses to Judah the Holy, yet to render the tradition still more certain, the Jewish doctors inform us, that this oral law, was

also committed, in a special manner, to the high priests; and handed down, through their line, untill it was committed to writing.

Judah Hakkadosh was the president of the Academy at Tiberias, and was held in great reputation for his sanctity, from which circumstance, he received his surname, *Hakkadosh, the Holy* The temple being now desolate, and the nation scattered abroad, it was feared, lest the traditionary law might be lost; therefore it was resolved, to preserve it by committing it to writing. Judah the Holy, who lived about the middle of the second century, undertook this work, and digested all the traditions he could collect, in six books, each consisting of several tracts. The whole number is SIXTY THREE. But these tracts are again subdivided, into numerous chapters. This is the famous MISHNA of the Jews. When finished it was received by the nation with the highest respect and confidence; and their doctors began, forthwith, to compose commentaries, on every part of it. These comments are called the GEMARA, or the COMPLETION; and the MISHNA and GEMARA, together, form THE TALMUD. But as this work of commenting on the text of the Mishna was pursued, not only in Judea, but in Babylonia, where a large number of Jews resided; hence it came to pass, that two Talmuds were formed; the one called, THE JERUSALEM TALMUD, the other, THE BABYLONISH TALMUD. In both these, the MISHNA,

committed to writing by Judah, is the text; but the commentaries are widely different. The former was completed before the close of the third century of the Christian era; the latter, was not completed until towards the close of the fifth century. The Babylonish Talmud is much the largest of the two; for while that of Jerusalem has been printed in one folio volume, this fills twelve folios. This last is also held, in much higher esteem, by the Jews; and indeed it comprehends, all the learning and religion of that people, since they have been cast off for their unbelief and rejection of the true Messiah.

MAIMONIDES has given an excellent digest, of all the laws and institutions, enjoined in this great work.

The Jews place fully as much faith in the Talmud, as they do in the Bible. Indeed, it is held in much greater esteem, and the reading of it is much more encouraged. It is a saying of one of their most esteemed Rabbies, "That the oral law is the foundation of the written; nor can the written law be expounded, but by the oral." Agreeably to this, in their confession, called, *the golden altar*, it is said, "It is impossible for us to stand upon the foundation of our holy law, which is the written law, unless it be by the oral law, which is the exposition thereof." In the Talmud it is written, "That to give attention to the study of the Bible is some virtue; but he who pays attention to

the study of the Mishna, possesses a virtue which shall receive a reward; and he who occupies himself in reading the Gemara, has a virtue, than which, there is none more excellent." Nay, they go to the impious length of saying, "That he who is employed in the study of the Bible and nothing else, does but waste his time." They maintain, that if the declarations of this oral law be ever so inconsistent with reason and common sense, they must be received with implicit faith, "You must not depart from them," says Rabbi Sol. Jarchi, "if they should assert that your right hand is your left; or your left your right." And in the Talmud it is taught, "That, to sin against the words of the scribes, is far more grievous than to sin against the words of the Law." "My son attend rather to the words of the scribes, than to the words of the Law." "The text of the Bible is like water, but the Mishna is like wine;" with many other similar comparisons.

Without the oral law, they assert, that the written law remains in perfect darkness: for, say they, "There are many things in Scripture, which are contradictory, and which can in no way be reconciled, but by the oral law, which Moses received in Mount Sinai." In conformity with these sentiments, is the conduct of the Jews, until this day. Their learned men spend almost all their time, in poring over the Talmud; and he, among them, who knows most of the contents of this monstrous far-

rage of lies and nonsense, is esteemed the most learned man. In consequence of their implicit faith in this oral law, it becomes almost useless to reason with the Jews out of the Scriptures of the Old Testament. It is a matter of real importance, therefore, to show, that this whole fabric rests on a sandy foundation; and to demonstrate, that there is no evidence, whatsoever, that any such law was ever given to Moses, on Sinai. To this subject, therefore, I would now solicit the attention of the reader.

Here then, let it be observed, that we have no controversy with the Jews concerning the written law, Moral, Ceremonial, or Political: nor do we deny that Moses received from God on Mount Sinai, some explication of the written law. But what we maintain, is, that this exposition did not form a *second* distinct law; that it was not the same as the oral law of the Jews, contained in the Talmud; that it was not received by Moses in a distinct form from the written law, and attended with a prohibition to commit it to writing.

In support of these positions, we solicit the attention of the impartial reader, to the following arguments:—

1. There is not the slightest mention of any such law in all the sacred records; neither of its original communication to Moses, nor of its transmission to posterity, in the way pretended by the Jews. Now, we ask, is it probable, that if such a law had

been given, there should never have been any hint of the matter, nor the least reference to it, in the whole Bible? Certainly, this total silence of Scripture is very little favourable to the doctrine of an oral law. Maimonides, does indeed, pretend to find a reference to it, in Exodus xxix. 12. *I will give you saith the Lord, a law, and commandment;* by the first of these he understands, the written law, and by the last, the oral. But if he had only attended to the words next ensuing, he would never have adduced this text in confirmation of an oral law; *which I have written that thou mayest teach them.* And we know that it is very common to express the written law by both these terms, as well as by several others of the same import. Now if no record exists of such a law having been given to Moses, how can we, at this late period, be satisfied of the fact? If it was never heard of for more than two thousand years afterwards, what evidence is there that it ever existed.

2. Again, we know, that in the time of king Josiah, the written law which had been lost, was found again. How great was the consternation of the pious king and his court, on this occasion! How memorable the history of this fact! But what became of the oral law, during this period? Is it reasonable to think, that this would remain uninjured through successive ages of idolatry, when the written law was so entirely rejected? If they had forgotten what was in their written law, would

they be likely to retain that which was oral? If the written law was lost, would the traditionary law be preserved? And if this was at any time lost, how could it be recovered? Not from the written law, for this does not contain it; not from the memory of man, for the supposition is, that it was thence obliterated. If then, this law, by any chance, was once lost, it is manifest, that it could never be recovered, but by divine revelation. And when we survey the history of the Jews, is it conceivable, that such a body of law, as that contained in the Talmud, immensely larger than the written law, could have been preserved entire, through so many generations, merely by oral communication? The Jews, indeed, amuse us with a fable, on this subject. They tell us that while the Israelites mourned on account of the death of Moses, they forgot three thousand of these traditions, which were recovered by the ingenuity of Othniel the son of Kenaz. This is ridiculous enough. What a heap of traditions must that have been, from which three thousand could be lost at once? And how profound the genius of Othniel, which was able to bring to light such a multitude of precepts, after they had been completely forgotten? But the proof of this fact is more ludicrous still. It is derived from Joshua xv. 16, 17. *And Caleb said, he that smiteth Kirjath-Sepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife. And Othniel the son of Kenaz, the*

brother of Caleb, took it: and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife.

The unlearned reader should be informed that *Kirjath-Sepher*, means, *the city of the book.*

But, who retained the oral law safely preserved in his memory, during the long reign of Manasseh; and during the reign of Amon, and of Josiah? Where was that law, during the seventy years captivity, in Babylon? Have we not a word to inform us of the fate of this law, in all the histories of those times? What, is there not a hint concerning the preservation of a deposit so precious, as this law is pretended to be? We must say again, that this continued silence of Scripture, through a period of so many hundreds of years, speaks little in favour of the unwritten law.

3. The Jews again inform us, that this law was prohibited to be written; but whence do they derive the proof of this assertion? Let the evidence, if there be any, be produced. Must we have recourse to the oral law itself, for testimony? Be it so. But why then is it now written, and has been, for more than fifteen hundred years? In the Talmud, it is said, "The words of the written law, it is not lawful for you to commit to oral tradition; nor the words of the oral law to writing." And Sol. Jarhci says, "Neither is it lawful to write the oral law." Now we say, there was a law containing such a prohibition, or there was not. If the former, then the Talmudists have transgressed a positive

precept of this law, in committing it to writing; if the latter, then their Talmud and their Rabbies speak falsely. Let them choose, in this dilemma.

4. But it can be proved, that whatever laws Moses received from God, the same he was commanded *to write.* It is said, *And Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord.—And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord.*

And again, it is said, *And the Lord said to Moses, write these words, for according to these words, have I made a covenant with you and with Israel.* And it is worthy of particular observation, that wherever the people are called upon to obey the law of the Lord, no mention is made of any other than the written law. Thus Moses, when his end approached, made a speech unto the people; after which it is added, *And Moses wrote this law and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and unto all the elders of Israel. And Moses commanded them saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, when all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read it before all Israel in their hearing.*

Here, observe, there is no mention of any other

* Exod. xxiv. 3, 4. xxxiv. 27, 28. Deut. xxxi. 9, 24.

but the written law. There is no direction to repeat the oral law, at this time of leisure; but surely it was more necessary to command the people to do this, if there had been such a law, than to hear the written law which they might read from time to time.

In the time of Ahaz, the sacred historian informs us, *That the Lord testified against Israel and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent unto you by my servants the prophets.*

Now it is very manifest, that the law which they are reproved for breaking, was the written law; for in the same chapter, we have the following exhortation; *And the statutes, and the ordinances, and the law, and the commandments which* HE WROTE *for you, ye shall observe to do for evermore.*

The prophets continually refer the people *to the law and to the testimony*, and declare, *if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*

When Jehoshaphat set about reforming and instructing the people, and set on foot an important mission, consisting of princes and levites, to teach them,

2 Kings xvii. 13, 37.

they confined themselves to what was written in the Scriptures, *And they taught in Judah, and had the book of the law of the Lord with them, and went about through all the cities of Judah, and taught the people.*

So also Ezra, when he instructed the people, who had returned from Babylon, made use of no other than the written law; *And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation, both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding.—And he read therein before the street, that was before the water gate, from the morning until mid-day, before the men and the women, and those that could understand: and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law.—And Ezra stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose;—And Ezra opened the book in sight of all the people, and when he opened it, all the people stood up. And the priests and the Levites caused the people to understand the law;—And they read in the book, in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused the people to understand the reading.*

5. Besides, the written law is pronounced to be perfect, so that nothing need, or could be added to it, therefore the oral law was superfluous. *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. Ye shall not add unto the word which I command*

2 Chron. xvii. 9. Neh. viii. 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8.
Psalm xix. 8. Deut. iv. 1, 2.

you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.

It is not a valid objection which they bring against this argument, that Christians add the gospel to the law; for this is not, properly speaking, a new law. The gospel is a promise of grace and salvation. The precepts of the law are, indeed, specially employed in the gospel, to a purpose for which they were not originally intended: but the gospel, in whatever light it may be viewed, is committed to writing, and no part of it left to depend on oral tradition.

6. In the numerous exhortations and injunctions of Almighty God, recorded in the Old Testament, there is not an instance of any one being commanded to do any thing, not contained in the written law, which proves, that, either there was no other law in existence, or that obedience to it was not required; and if obedience was not required, then, certainly, there was no law.*

Moreover, many of the Jews, themselves, concur with us, in rejecting the oral law. The chief advocates of traditions were the Pharisees, who arose out of the schools of Hillel and Shammai, that lived after the times of the Maccabees. On this subject,

* It would be tedious to refer to all the texts in which commands and exhortations are given, but the reader may consult the following: Deut. x. 12, 13. xi. 32. xxviii. 1. xxx. 20. xxix. 9, 20. xxxi. 45, 46. Josh. i. 7. xxiii. 6. 2 Kings xiv. 6. 2 Chron. xxv. 4. xxx. 16.

we have the testimony of Jerome, who says, "Shammai and Hillel, from whom arose the Scribes and Pharisees, not long before the birth of Christ; the first of whom was called the *dissipator*, and the last, *profane*; because, by their traditions, they destroyed the law of God."* But on this point, the Sadducees were opposed to the Pharisees, and according to Josephus, rejected all traditions, adhering to the Scriptures alone. With them agreed the Samaritans, and Essenes. The Karaites also, received the written word, and rejected all traditions; although, in other respects, they did not agree with the Sadducees. And in consequence of this, they are hated and reviled by the other Jews, so that it is not without great difficulty, that they will receive a Karaite into one of their synagogues. Of this sect, there are still some remaining, in Poland, Russia, Turkey, and Africa.

It now remains to mention the arguments by which the Jews attempt to establish their oral law. These shall be taken from MANASSEH BEN ISRAEL,† one of their most learned and liberal men. He argues from the necessity of an oral law, to explain many parts of the written law. To confirm this opinion, he adduces several examples, as Exodus xii. 2. *This month shall be unto you the beginning of months, it shall be the first month of the year.* On this text he remarks, "That the name of the month is not mentioned. It is not

* In Jesa viii. † Concil. In Exod.

said, whether the months were lunar or solar, both of which were in ancient use ; and yet without knowing this, the precept could not be observed. The same difficulty occurs, in regard to the other annual feasts."

"Another example is taken from Lev. xi. 13, where it is commanded, that unclean birds shall not be eaten, and yet we are not furnished with any *criteria*, by which to distinguish the clean from the unclean, as in the case of beasts. A third example is from Exod. xxi. 29, *Let no man go out of his place on the seventh day*, and yet we are not informed, whether he was forbidden to leave his house, his court, his city, or his suburbs. So, in Lev. xxi 12, the priest is forbidden *to go out of the Sanctuary*, and no time is limited, but we know that the residence of the priests was without the precincts of the temple, and that they served there, in rotation."

"Again, in Exod. xx. 10, all work is prohibited on the sabbath, but circumcision is commanded to be performed on the eighth day ; and it is no where declared, whether this rite should be deferred, when the eighth day occurred on the sabbath. The same difficulty exists in regard to the slaying of the paschal lamb, which was confined by the law to the fourteenth day of the month, and we are no where informed what was to be done, when this was the sabbath" "In Deut. xxiv. we have many laws relating to marriage, but we are no where

informed what constituted a legal marriage." "In the feast of the Tabernacles, beautiful branches of trees are directed to be used, but the species of tree is not mentioned. And in the Feast of Weeks, it is commanded, *that on the fiftieth day, the wave-sheaf should be offered from their habitations;* but where it should be offered, is not said. And, finally, among prohibited marriages, the wife of an uncle is never mentioned."

In these, and many other instances, the learned Jew observes, that the law could only be understood by such oral tradition, as he supposes accompanied the written law.

Now, in answer to these things, we observe, first, in the general, that however many difficulties may be started respecting the precise meaning of many parts of the law, these can never prove the existence of an oral law. The decision on these points might have been left to the discretion of the worshippers, or to the common sense of the people. Besides, many things may appear obscure to us, which were not so to the ancient Israelites; so that they might have needed no oral law to explain them.

Again, it is one thing to expound a law, and another to add something to it: but the oral law for which they plead, is not a mere exposition, but an additional law.

It is one thing to avail ourselves of traditions to interpret a law, and another to receive them as di-

vine, and absolutely necessary. We do not deny, that many things may be performed according to ancient custom, or the traditions of preceding ages, in things indifferent; but we do deny, that these can be considered as divine, or necessary.

But particularly, we answer, that the alleged difficulty about the name of the month, has no existence, for it can be very well ascertained from the circumstances of the case; and in Exod. xiii. the month is named. The civil year of the Jews began with the month Tisri, but the Ecclesiastical, with Abib. There is, in fact, no greater difficulty here, than in any other case, where the circumstance o time is mentioned. There was no need of understanding the method of reducing solar and lunar years into one another, to decide this matter. And if the Talmud be examined on this point, where the oral law is supposed to be now contained, there will be found there, no satisfactory method of computing time. And, indeed, the Talmudic doctors are so far from being agreed on this subject, that any thing else may be found sooner, than a law regulating this matter, in the Talmud.

And in regard to the unclean birds, why was it necessary to have *criteria* to distinguish them, since a catalogue of them is given in the very passage to which reference is made. And I would ask, does the pretended oral law contain any such *criteria* to direct in this case? Nothing less. The difficulty about the people leaving their place on

the sabbath, and the priests leaving the temple, is really too trifling to require any serious consideration. And as to what should be done when the day of circumcising a child, or of killing the passover happened on the Sabbath, it is a point easily decided. These positive institutions ought to have been observed, on whatever day they occurred.

The question respecting matrimony, should rather provoke a smile, than a serious answer; for who is ignorant, what constitutes a lawful marriage? Or who would suppose that the ceremonies attendant on this transaction ought to be prescribed by the law of God; or, that another law was requisite for the purpose. As well might our learned Jew, insist on the necessity of an Oral Law, to teach us how we should eat, drink, and perform our daily work.

If the law prescribed beautiful branches of trees, to be used in the Feast of Tabernacles, what need was there of an oral law, to teach any thing more. If such branches were used, it was of course indifferent, whether they were of this or that species.

Equally futile are the other arguments of the author, and need not be answered in detail.

It appears, therefore, that there is no evidence, that God ever gave any law to Moses, distinct from that which is written in the Pentateuch. And there is good reason to believe, that the various laws found in the Mishna, were never received from God, nor derived by tradition from Moses; but

were traditions of the Fathers, such as were in use in the time of our Saviour, who severely reprehends the Scribes and Pharisees, for setting aside, and rendering of no effect, the word of God, by their unauthorized traditions.

The internal evidence is itself sufficient to convince us, that the laws of the Talmud are human inventions, and not divine institutions; except, that those circumstances of divine worship which were left to the discretion of the people, and which were regulated by custom, may be often found preserved, in this immense work.

PART XX.

THE CANON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

SECTION I.

METHOD OF SETTLING THE CANON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

At first view, it would seem, that there would be found much less difficulty in determining the Canon of the New Testament, than that of the Old; seeing the books which compose the former are much more recent, than those of the latter. And we have historical records, which reach up to the time, when the Canon of the New Testament was formed, but in regard to most of the books of the Old Testament, there are extant no collateral documents, nor any authentic histories, which go back to a period within some hundred years of the time, when they were penned. But however plausible this may appear, it is entirely fallacious; and, when we come to examine into the Canonical authority of the books of the New Tertament, much greater difficulties are found to exist, than were encountered, in stablishing the Canon of the Old Testament. The reasons of this difference, are, such as these;

1. The Canon of the Old Testament was settled by Ezra, an inspired man, but the books of the New Testament were collected into the Canon, after inspiration had ceased, in the Christian church.

2. The Canon of the Old Testament received the sanction of Christ and his apostles, but when the Canon of the New Testament was completed, all the apostles were dead.

3. The number of Apocryphal books which claim admission into the Canon of the Old Testament is inconsiderable, and the invalidity of their title, easily demonstrated; but the Apocryphal books of the New Testament are very numerous; and some of them have a much higher claim to Canonical authority, than any of those obscure books, which claim admittance into the Old Testament.

Toland in his famous catalogue of the books of the New Testament, lays in a claim for more than eighty, which he pretends ought to be received into the Canon.

While there was a universal agreement, in the primitive church, in regard to the Canonical authority of most of the books of the New Testament, there were some who doubted, respecting the Epistle of James, The Second of Peter, The Second and Third of John, The Epistle to the Hebrews, and the Revelation.

4. There has been, moreover, much more doubt and controversy respecting some of the genuine books of the New Testament, than ever existed in regard to any contained in the Jewish Canon.

5. While some of the ancient Fathers disputed the right of some of the books which have been received into the Canon, some modern doctors, of

no inconsiderable learning, have been of opinion, that several, which were formerly excluded, ought yet to be received. This opinion was explicitly declared by archbishop Wake, and Mr. Whiston, to say nothing about Toland, who was an enemy to the gospel.*

6. To all which we may add, that some moderns, of great name, have expressed doubts respecting some of the books now in the Canon of the New Testament; as Luther, for a while, rejected the Epistle of James: and Erasmus, Calvin, Cajetan, and Kirstenius, hesitated respecting the authority of the book of Revelation: and J. D. Michaelis rejected this book from the Canon, and expressed himself very unfavourably respecting the gospels of Mark and Luke.

After what has been said, in the former part of this work, respecting the importance of settling the Canon on correct principles, it will be unnecessary to add any thing here on that subject, except to say, that this inquiry cannot be less interesting in regard to the New Testament, than to the Old. It is a subject which calls for our utmost diligence and impartialty. It is one which we cannot neglect with a good conscience; for the inquiry is nothing less than to ascertain, what revelation God has made to us, and where it is to be found.

And, as to the proper method of settling the

* See Jones on the Canon.

strong; and that when the mind of the reader is truly illuminated, it derives from this source, the most unwavering conviction of their truth and divine authority; but that every sincere Christian should be able, in all cases, by this internal light, to distinguish between Canonical books and such as are not, is surely no very safe or reasonable opinion. Suppose, that a thousand books of various kinds, including the Canonical, were placed before any sincere Christian, would he be able, without mistake, to select from this mass, the twenty seven books of which the New Testament is composed, if he had nothing to guide him but the internal evidence? Would every such person be able, at once to determine, whether the book of *Ecclesiastes*, or of *Ecclesiasticus* belonged to the Canon of the Old Testament, by internal evidence alone? It is certain, that the influence of the Holy Spirit is necessary to produce a true faith in the word of God, but to make this the only criterion by which to judge of the Canonical authority of a book, is certainly liable to strong objections. The tendency of this doctrine is to enthusiasm, and the consequence of acting upon it, would be to unsettle, rather than establish the Canon of Holy Scripture; for it would be strange, if some persons, without any other guidance than their own spiritual taste, would not pretend that other books besides those long received, were Canonical; or, would be disposed to reject some part of these. If this evidence were as infal-

lible as some would have it to be, then the authenticity of every disputed text, as well as the Canonical authority of every book, might be ascertained by it: But we have already seen, that a few eminently pious men doubted for a while, respecting the Canonical authority of some genuine books of the New Testament.

And if the internal evidence were the only criterion of Canonical authority to which we could resort, there would remain no possibility of convincing any person of the inspiration of a book, unless he could perceive in it the internal evidence of a divine origin. In many cases this species of evidence can scarcely be said to exist, as when for wise purposes God directs or inspires a prophet to record genealogical tables; or, even in the narration of common events, I do not see how it can be determined from internal evidence, that the history is written by inspiration; for, the only circumstance in which an inspired narrative differs from a faithful human history, is that the one is infallible, and the other is not; but the existence of this infallibility or the absence of it, is not apparent from reading the books. Both accounts may appear consistent, and it is only, or chiefly, by external evidence that we can know that one of them is inspired. Who could undertake to say, that from internal evidence alone, he could determine, that the book of Esther, or the Chronicles, were written by divine inspiration? Besides, some books are obscure and

not easily understood; now, how could any one discern the internal evidence of a book, the meaning of which he did not yet understand?

The evidence, arising from a general view of the Scriptures, collectively, is most convincing, but is not so well adapted to determine, whether some one book considered separately, was certainly written by divine inspiration.

It is necessary, therefore, to proceed to our destined point, in a more circuitous way. We must be at the pains to examine into the history of the Canon; and as was before said, to ascertain what books were esteemed Canonical by all those who had the best opportunity of judging of this matter; and when the internal evidence is found corroborating the external, the two combined, may produce a degree of conviction, which leaves no room to desire any stronger evidence.

The question to be decided, is a matter of fact. It is an inquiry respecting the real authors of the books of the New Testament: whether they were written by the persons whose names they bear; or by others under their names. The inspiration of these books, though closely allied to this subject, is not now the object of inquiry. The proper method of determining a matter of fact, evidently is, to have recourse to those persons who were witnesses of it, or who received their information from others who were witnesses. It is only in this way that we know, that Homer, Ho-

race, Virgil, Livy, and Tully, wrote the books, which now go under their names.

The early Christians pursued this method of determining what books were Canonical. They searched into the records of the church, before their time, and from these ascertained what books should be received, as belonging to the Sacred Volume. They appealed to that certain and universal tradition, which attested the genuineness of these books. IRENÆUS, TERTULLIAN, EUSEBIUS, CYRIL, and AUGUSTINE, have all made use of this argument, in establishing the Canon of the New Testament.

The question is often asked, when was the Canon of the New Testament constituted? and by what authority? Many persons who write and speak on this subject, appear to entertain a wrong impression, in regard to it: as if the books of the New Testament could not be of authority, until they were sanctioned by some Ecclesiastical Council, or by some publicly expressed opinion of the Fathers of the church; and as if any portion of their authority depended on their being collected into one volume. But the truth is, that every one of these books was of authority, as far as known, from the moment of its publication; and its right to a place in the Canon, is not derived from the sanction of any church, or Council, but from the fact, that it was written by inspiration. And the appeal to testimony is not to prove, that any

Council of bishops, or others, gave sanction to the book, but to show, that it is indeed the genuine work of Matthew, or John, or Peter, or Paul, whom we know to have been inspired.

The books of the New Testament were, therefore, of full authority, before they were collected into one volume; and it would have made no difference, if they had never been included in one volume, but had retained that separate form, in which they were first published. And it is by no means certain, that these books were, at a very early period, bound in one volume. As far as we have any testimony on the subject, the probability is, that it was more customary to include them in two volumes; one of which was called the GOSPEL, and the other, the APOSTLES. Some of the oldest MSS. of the New Testament extant, appear to have been put up in this form; and the Fathers often refer to the Scriptures of the New Testament, under these two titles. The question, when was the Canon constituted, admits therefore, of no other proper answer than this, that as soon as the last book of the New Testament was written and published, the Canon was completed. But if the question relates to the time when these books were collected together, and published in a single volume, or in two volumes, it admits of no definite answer; for those churches which were situated nearest to the place, where any particular books were published, would, of course, obtain copies much earlier, than church-

es in a remote part of the world. For a considerable period, the collection of these books, in each church, must have been necessarily incomplete; for it would take some time to send to the church, or people, with whom the autographs were deposited, and to write off fair copies. This necessary process will also account for the fact, that some of the smaller books were not received by the churches so early, nor so universally, as the larger. The solicitude of the churches to possess, immediately, the more extensive books of the New Testament, would, doubtless, induce them to make a great exertion to acquire copies; but probably, the smaller, would not be so much spoken of, nor would there be so strong a desire to obtain them without delay. Considering how difficult it is now, with all our improvements in the typographical art, to multiply copies of the Scriptures with sufficient rapidity, it is truly wonderful, how so many churches as were founded during the first century, to say nothing of individuals, could all be supplied with copies of the New Testament, when there was no speedier method of producing them, than by writing every letter with the pen! The pen of a ready writer must then, indeed, have been of immense value. The idea entertained by some, especially by Dodwell, that these books lay for a long time locked up in the coffers of the churches to which they were addressed, and totally unknown to the rest of the world, is in itself most improbable; and is repug-

nant to all the testimony which exists on the subject. Even as early as the time when Peter wrote his second Epistle, the writings of Paul were in the hands of the churches, and were classed with the other Scriptures.* And the citation from these books by the earliest Christian writers, living in different countries, demonstrates, that from the time of their publication, they were sought after with avidity, and were widely dispersed. How intense the interest which the first Christians felt in the writings of the apostles can scarcely be conceived by us, who have been familiar with these books from our earliest years. How solicitous would they be, for example, who had never seen Paul, but had heard of his wonderful conversion, and extraordinary labours and gifts, to read his writings? and probably they who had enjoyed the high privilege of hearing this apostle preach, would not be less desirous of reading his Epistles! As we know, from the nature of the case, as well as from testimony, that many uncertain accounts of Christ's discourses and miracles had obtained circulation, how greatly would the primitive Christians rejoice, to obtain an authentic history, from the pen of an apostle, or from one who wrote precisely what was dictated by an apostle? We need no longer wonder, therefore, that every church should wish to possess a collection of the

* 2 Pet. iii. 14, 15.

writings of the apostles; and knowing them to be the productions of inspired men, they would want no further sanction of their authority. All that was requisite was to be certain, that the book was indeed written by the apostle, whose name it bore. And this leads me to observe, that some things in Paul's Epistles, which seem to common readers to be of no importance, were of the utmost consequence. Such as, *I Tertius who wrote this Epistle &c.—The salutation with mine own hand.—So I write in every epistle.—Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.—The salutation by the hand of me Paul.—The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every Epistle.** This apostle commonly employed an amanuensis; but that the churches to which he wrote, might have the assurance of the genuineness of his Epistles, from seeing his own hand writing, he constantly wrote the SALUTATION, himself. So much care was taken to have these sacred writings well authenticated, on their first publication. And on the same account it was, that he and the other apostles, were so particular in giving the names, and the characters, of those who were the bearers of their Epistles. And it seems, that they were always committed to the care of men of high esti-

* Rom. xvi. 22. 1 Cor. xvi. 21. Gal. vi. 11. 2 Thes. iii. 17.

mation in the church; and commonly, more than one appears to have been intrusted with this important commission.

If it be inquired, what became of the autographs of these sacred books, and why they were not preserved; since this would have prevented all uncertainty respecting the true reading, and would have relieved the Biblical critic, from a large share of labour? It is sufficient to answer, that nothing different has occurred, in relation to these autographs, from that which has happened to all other ancient writings. No man can produce the autograph of any book as old as the New Testament, unless it has been preserved in some extraordinary way, as in the case of the Manuscripts of Herculaneum; neither could it be supposed, that in the midst of such vicissitudes, revolutions, and persecutions, as the Christian church endured, this object could have been secured, by any thing short of a miracle. And God knew, that by a superintending providence over the Sacred Scriptures, they could be transmitted with sufficient accuracy, by means of apographs, to the most distant generations. Indeed, there is reason to believe, that the Christians of early times were so absorbed and impressed with the glory of the truths revealed, that they gave themselves little concern about the mere vehicle by which they were communicated. They had matters of such deep interest, and so novel, before their eyes, that they had neither time, nor inclination, for the minutiæ of criticism. It may be,

therefore, that they did not set so high a value on the possession of the autograph of an inspired book, as we should, but considered a copy, made with scrupulous fidelity, as equally valuable with the original. And God may have suffered these autographs of the sacred writings to perish, lest in process of time, they should have become idolized, like the brazen serpent; or lest men should be led superstitiously to venerate the mere parchment and ink, and form and letters, employed by an apostle. Certainly, the history of the church is such, as to render such an idea far from being improbable.

But, although, little is said about the originals of the apostle's writings, we have a testimony in Tertullian, that the AUTHENTIC LETTERS of the apostles, might be seen by any that would take the pains to go to the churches, to which they were addressed. Some, indeed, think, that Tertullian does not mean to refer to the autographs, but to authentic copies; but why then send the inquirer to the churches to which the Epistles were addressed? Had not other churches, all over the world, authentic copies of these Epistles also? There seems to be good reason therefore, for believing, that the autographs, or original letters of the Apostles, were preserved by the churches to which they were addressed, in the time of Tertullian.*

* See note B.

SECTION II.

CATALOGUES OF THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT—CANONICAL BOOKS ONLY CITED AS AUTHORITY BY THE FATHERS, AND READ IN THE CHURCHES AS SCRIPTURE.

Having declared our purpose, to place the settling of the Canon of the New Testament, on the footing of authentic testimony, we will now proceed to adduce our authorities, and shall begin with an examination of the ancient catalogues of the New Testament.

The slightest attention to the works of the Fathers, will convince any one, that the writings of the apostles were held, from the beginning, in the highest estimation; that great pains were taken to distinguish the genuine productions of these inspired men, from all other books; that they were sought out with uncommon diligence, and read with profound attention and veneration, not only in private, but publicly in the churches; and that they are cited and referred to, universally, as decisive on every point of doctrine, and as authoritative standards for the regulation of faith and practice.

This being the state of the case when the books of the New Testament were communicated to the churches, we are enabled, in regard to most of

them, to produce testimony of the most satisfactory kind, that they were admitted into the Canon, and received as inspired, by the universal consent of Christians, in every part of the world. And as to these few books, concerning which some persons entertained doubts, it can be shown, that as soon as their claims were fully and impartially investigated, they also were received with universal consent. And that other books, however excellent as human compositions, were never put upon a level with the Canonical books of the New Testament; that spurious writings, under the names of the apostles, were promptly and decisively rejected, and that the churches were repeatedly warned against such Apocryphal books.

To do justice to this subject, will require some detail which may appear dry to the reader, but should be interesting to every person who wishes to know assuredly, that what he receives as Sacred Scripture, is no imposture, but the genuine, authentic productions of those inspired men, whom Christ appointed to be his witnesses to the world, and to whom was committed the sacred deposit of divine truth, intended for the instruction and government of the church in all future ages.

In exhibiting the evidence of the Canonical authority of these books, we shall first attend to some general considerations, which relate to the whole volume, and then adduce testimony in favour of each book, now included in the Canon.

And here, as in the case of the Old Testament, we find, that at a very early period, catalogues of these books were published, by most of the distinguished Fathers whose writings have come down to us; the same has been done also, by several Councils, whose decrees are still extant.

These catalogues, are, for the most part, perfectly harmonious. In a few of them, some books now in the Canon, are omitted, for which omission a satisfactory reason can commonly be assigned. In the first circulation of the Sacred Scriptures there was great need of such lists; as the distant churches and common Christians, were liable to be imposed on by spurious writings, which seem to have abounded in those times. It was, therefore, a most important part of the instruction given to Christians, by their spiritual guides, to inform them accurately, what books belonged to the Canon. Great pains were taken, also, to know the truth on this subject. Pious bishops, for this single purpose, travelled into Judea, and remained there for some time, that they might learn accurately, every circumstance, relative to the authenticity of these writings.

The first regular catalogue of the books of the New Testament, which we find on record, is by Origen, whose extensive Biblical knowledge highly qualified him to judge correctly in this case. He had not only read much, but travelled extensively, and resided a great part of his life on the

confines of Judea, in a situation favourable to accurate information, from every part of the church, where any of these books were originally published. ORIGEN lived, and flourished, about one hundred years after the death of the Apostle John. He was, therefore, near enough to the time of the publication of these books, to obtain the most certain information of their authors. Most of the original writings of this great and learned man have perished, but his catalogue of the books of the New Testament has been preserved by Eusebius, in his Ecclesiastical History.* It was contained in Origen's Homilies on the gospel of Matthew; and was repeated in his Homilies on the gospel of John.

In this catalogue, he mentions, THE FOUR GOSPELS, THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, FOURTEEN EPISTLES OF PAUL, TWO OF PETER, THREE OF JOHN, and THE BOOK OF REVELATION. This enumeration includes all the present Canon, except the Epistles of JAMES, and JUDE, but these were omitted by accident, not design; for in other parts of his writings, he acknowledges these Epistles as a part of the Canon. And while Origen furnishes us with so full a catalogue of the books now in the Canon, he inserts no others, which proves, that in his time, the Canon was well settled among the learned; and that the distinction between inspired writings and human compositions, was as clearly marked, as at any subsequent period.

* Lib. vi. c. 25.

In the work entitled, APOSTOLICAL CONSTITUTIONS, ascribed to CLEMENT of Rome, there is a catalogue of the books of the New Testament; but as this work is not genuine, and of an uncertain author and age, I will not make use of it.

So also, the catalogue ascribed to the COUNCIL OF NICE, is not genuine, and is connected with a story, which bears every mark of superstitious credulity.* This therefore, shall be likewise omitted. We stand in no need of suspicious testimony, on this subject. Witnesses of the most undoubted veracity, and distinguished intelligence, can be found in every successive age.

2. The next catalogue of the books of the New Testament to which I will refer, is that of EUSEBIUS, the learned Historian of the church; to whose diligence and fidelity, in collecting Ecclesiastical facts, we are more indebted, than to the labours of all other men, for that period which intervened between the days of the Apostles and his own times.

* The story is briefly this. The Fathers of the Council of Nice, put all the books which claimed a place in the Sacred Cannon under the communion table of the church, and then prayed that such of them as were inspired might be found uppermost, and the Apocryphal below; whereupon the event occurred agreeably to their wishes; and thus a clear line of distinction was made between Canonical books and such as were not Canonical. This story is related in the Synodicon of Popus, an obscure writer, and is undeserving of the smallest credit.

Eusebius may be considered as giving his testimony about one hundred years after Origen. His catalogue may be seen in his Ecclesiastical History.* In it, he enumerates every book which we now have in the Canon, and no others; but he mentions that the Epistle of James, The second of Peter, and second and third of John, were doubted of by some; and that Revelation was rejected by some, and received by others; but Eusebius himself declares it to be his opinion, that it should be received without doubt.

There is no single witness among the whole number of Ecclesiastical writers, who was more competent to give accurate information on this subject, than Eusebius. He had spent a great part of his life in searching into the antiquities of the Christian church; and he had an intimate acquaintance with all the records relating to Ecclesiastical affairs, many of which are now lost; and almost the only information which we have of them has been transmitted to us, by this diligent compiler.

3. Athanasius, so well known for his writings and his sufferings in defence of the divinity of our Saviour, in his Festal Epistle, and in his Synopsis of Scripture, has left a catalogue of the books of the New Testament, which perfectly agrees with the Canon now in use.

* Euseb. Ecc. Hist. L. iii. c. 25. comp. with c. 3.

4. CYRIL, in his Catechetical work, has also given us a catalogue, perfectly agreeing with ours, except that he omits the book of Revelation. Why that book was so often left out of the ancient catalogues and collections of the Scriptures, shall be mentioned hereafter. Athanasius and Cyril were contemporary with Eusebius; the latter, however, may more properly be considered, as twenty or thirty years later.

5. Then, a little after the middle of the fourth century, we have the testimony of all the bishops assembled in THE COUNCIL OF LAODICEA. The catalogue of this council is contained in their sixtieth Canon, and is exactly the same as ours, except that the book of Revelation is omitted. The decrees of this council, were, in a short time, received into the Canons of the universal church; and among the rest, this catalogue of the books of the New Testament. Thus, we find, that as early as the middle of the fourth century, there was a universal consent, in all parts of the world to which the Christian church extended, as to the books which constituted the Canon of the New Testament, with the single exception of the book of Revelation; and that this book was also generally admitted to be canonical, we shall take the opportunity of proving, in the sequel of this work.

6. But a few years elapsed from the meeting of this council, before EPIPHANIUS, bishop of Sala-

mis, in the Island of Cyprus, published his work ON HERESIES, in which he gives a catalogue of the Canonical books of the New Testament, which, in every respect, is the same, as the Canon now received.

7. About the same time, GREGORY NAZIANZEN, bishop of Constantinople, in a Poem, ON THE TRUE AND GENUINE SCRIPTURES, mentions distinctly, all the books now received, except Revelation.

8. A few years later, we have a list of the books of the New Testament in a work of PHILASTRIUS, bishop of *Brixia*, in Italy, which corresponds, in all respects, with those now received; except that he mentions no more than thirteen of Paul's Epistles. If the omission was designed, it probably relates to the Epistle to the Hebrews.

9. At the same time, lived JEROME, who translated the whole Bible into Latin. He furnishes us with a catalogue answering to our present Canon, in all respects. He does, however, speak doubtfully about the Epistle to the Hebrews, on account of the uncertainty of its author. But, in other parts of his writings, he shows, that he received this book as Canonical, as well as the rest.*

10. The catalogue of RUFIN varies in nothing from the Canon now received.†

11. AUGUSTINE, in his work on CHRISTIAN

* Epist. ad Paulinum.

† Expos. in Symbol. Apost.

DOCTRINE, has inserted the names of the books of the New Testament, which, in all respects, are the same as ours.

12. THE COUNCIL OF CARTHAGE, at which Augustine was present, have furnished a catalogue, which perfectly agrees with ours. At this council, forty four bishops attended. The list referred to, is found, in their forty eighth canon.

13. The unknown author, who goes under the name of DYONISIUS THE AREOPAGITE, so describes the books of the New Testament as to show, that he received the very same, as are now in the Canon.

Another satisfactory source of evidence, in favour of the Canon of the New Testament, as now received, is the fact, that these books were quoted as Sacred Scripture, by all the Fathers, living in parts of the world the most remote from each other. The truth of this assertion will fully appear, when we come to speak, particularly, of the books which compose the Canon. Now, how can it be accounted for, that these books, and these alone, should be cited as authority, in Asia, Africa, and Europe? No other reason can be assigned, than one of these two; either, they knew no other books which claimed to be Canonical; or, if they did, they did not esteem them of equal authority, with those which they cited. On either of these grounds the conclusion is the same, THAT THE BOOKS QUOTED AS SCRIPTURE ARE ALONE THE CANONICAL BOOKS. To apply this rule to a particular case; THE FIRST

EPISTLE OF PETER is Canonical, because it is continually cited by the most ancient Christian writers, in every part of the world; but the book called, THE REVELATION OF PETER, is Apocryphal, because none of the early Fathers have taken any testimonies from it. The same is true of THE ACTS OF PETER, and THE GOSPEL OF PETER. These writings were totally unknown to the primitive church, and are therefore spurious. This argument is perfectly conclusive, and its force was perceived by the ancient defenders of the Canon of the New Testament. Eusebius, repeatedly has recourse to it: And, therefore, those persons who have aimed to unsettle our present Canon, as TOLAND and DODWELL, have attempted to prove that the early Christian writers were in the habit of quoting indifferently, and promiscuously, the books which we now receive, and others which are now rejected, as Apocryphal. But this is not correct, as has been shown, by NYE, RICHARDSON, and others. The true method of determining this matter, is by a careful examination of all the passages in the writings of the Fathers, where other books besides those now in the Canon have been quoted. Some progress was made in collecting the passages in the writings of the Fathers, in which any reference is made to the Apocryphal books, by the learned Jeremiah Jones, in his NEW METHOD OF SETTLING THE CANON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, but the work was left incomplete. This author, however,

positively denies, that it is common for the Fathers to cite these books as Scripture, and asserts, that there are only a very few instances, in which any of them seem to have fallen into this mistake.

A third proof of the genuineness of the Canon of the New Testament, may be derived from the fact, that these books were publicly read as Scripture, in all the christian churches.

As the Jews were accustomed to read the Sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament, in their Synagogues, so the early Christians transferred the same practice to the church; and it seems to have been in use even in the apostle's days, as appears by Col. iv. 16, where Paul speaks, of reading the Epistles, addressed to the churches, as a thing of course, *And when this Epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that ye likewise, read the Epistle from Laodicea.*

Justin Martyr explicitly testifies, that this was the custom in the beginning of the second century. "On the day," says, he "which is called Sunday, there is a meeting of all (Christians) who live either in cities, or country places, and THE MEMOIRS OF THE APOSTLES, and writings of the prophets, are read."*

Tertullian is equally explicit; for, in giving an account of the meetings of christians for worship, he says, "They assemble to read the

* Apol. ii. p. 93.

Scriptures, and offer up prayers." and in another place, among the solemn exercises of the Lord's Day, he reckons, "Reading the Scriptures, singing Psalms, &c."*

The same account is given by CYPRIAN,† and by the ancient author under the name of DYONISIUS THE AREOPAGITE ;‡ and by several other ancient authors. Now this practice of reading the Sacred Scriptures in the christian churches, began so early, that it is scarcely possible, that they could have been imposed on by supposititous writings. A more effectual method of guarding against Apocryphal writings obtaining a place in the Canon, could not have been devised. It afforded all the members of the church an opportunity of knowing what books were acknowledged as Canonical, and precluded all opportunity of foisting in spurious works; since, if this had been done in some one church, the practice of all other churches would quickly have exposed the imposture. Accordingly, the Fathers often referred to this custom, as the guide to the people, respecting the books which they should read; "Avoid Apocryphal books," says CYRIL to his catechumen, "And study carefully those Scriptures only, WHICH ARE PUBLICLY READ IN THE CHURCH." Again, having given a catalogue of the books of Scripture, he adds, "Let others be rejected, and such as ARE NOT READ

* Tertull. De Anima. † Cyp. Epist. 36, 39.
‡ Hierarch. Eco. c. 3.

IN THE CHURCHES, neither do you read in private."

It was decreed in the COUNCIL OF LAODICEA, "That no private Psalms should be read in the churches, nor any books without the Canon; but only the Canonical writings of the Old and New Testament." The same thing was determined in THE COUNCIL OF CARTHAGE. But notwithstanding these decrees, and the opinions of learned Fathers, there were some pieces read in some of the churches, which were not Canonical. Thus, DYONISIUS bishop of Corinth, in the second century, in a letter to the church of Rome, tells them, "That they read in their assemblies, on the Lord's day, Clement's Epistle:" And Eusebius declares, "That in his, and the preceding times, it was almost universally received, and read in most churches." He says also, "That THE SHEPHERD OF HERMAS, was read in many churches," which is confirmed by Athanasius and Rufin. Whilst these books which are not now in the Canon, were publicly read in many churches, the book of REVELATION was not, according to Cyril, read in the churches; nor commanded to be read, by the Council of Laodicea. It would seem, therefore, at first view, that the application of this rule would exclude the book of REVELATION from the Canon, and take in THE EPISTLE OF CLEMENT, and THE SHEPHERD OF HERMAS. But the rule does not apply to every thing which was read in the churches, but to such

books as were read as SACRED SCRIPTURE. It has appeared in a former part of this work, that several books, not in the Canon of the Old Testament, were nevertheless read in the churches; but the Fathers carefully distinguished between these, and the Canonical books. They were read for instruction and for the improvement of manners, but not as authority in matters of faith. They distinguished the books read in the churches, into *Canonical and Ecclesiastical*; of the latter kind, were the books mentioned above, and some others. The reason why the book of Revelation was not directed to be read publicly, shall be assigned, when we come to treat particularly of the Canonical authority of that book.

A fourth argument to prove, that our Canon of the New Testament is substantially correct, may be derived from the early versions of this sacred book, into other languages.

Although the Greek language was extensively known through the Roman empire, when the apostles wrote; yet the Christian church was in a short time extended into regions, where the common people, at least, were not acquainted with it; nor with any language, except their own vernacular tongue. While the gift of tongues continued, the difficulty of making known the Gospel to such people, would, in some measure, be obviated, but when these miraculous powers ceased, the necessity of a version of the Gospels and Epistles into

the language of the people, would become manifest. As far, therefore, as we may be permitted to reason from the nature or the case, and the necessities of the churches, it is exceedingly probable, that versions of the New Testament were made shortly after the death of the apostles, if they were not begun before. Can we suppose that the numerous Christians in Syria, Mesopotamia, and the various parts of Italy, would be long left, without having these precious books translated into a language which all the people could understand? But we are not left to our own reasonings on this subject. We know, that at a very early period, there existed Latin versions of the New Testament, which had been so long in use before the time of Jerome, as to have become considerably corrupt, on which account, he undertook a New Version, which soon superseded those that were more ancient. Now, although, nothing remains of these ancient Latin Versions, but uncertain fragments, yet we have good evidence, that they contained the same books, as were inserted in Jerome's Version, now denominated, the VULGATE.

But, perhaps the Old Syriac Version of the New Testament, called PESHITO, furnishes the strongest proof of the Canonical authority, of all the books which are conained in it. This excellent version has a very high claim to antiquity; and in the opinion of some of the best Syriac scholars, who have profoundly examined this subject, was made before the close of the first century.

The arguments for so early an origin, are not, indeed, conclusive, but they possess much probability, whether we consider the external, or internal evidence. The Syrian Christians have always insisted that this version was made by the apostle THADDEUS; but without admitting this claim, which would put it on a level with the Greek original, we may believe, that it ought not to be brought down lower than the second century. It is universally received by all the numerous sects of Syrian Christians, and must be anterior to the existence of the oldest of them. Manes, who lived in the second century, probably had read the New Testament in the Syriac, which was his native tongue; and JUSTIN MARTYR, when he testifies that the Scriptures of the New Testament, were read in the Assemblies of Christians, on every Sunday, probably refers to Syrian Christians, as Syria was his native place; where also he had his usual residence. And, MICHAELIS is of opinion, that MELITO, who wrote about A. D. 170, has expressly declared, that a Syrian Version of the Bible existed in his time. JEROME also testifies, explicitly, that when he wrote, the Syriac Bible was publicly read in the churches; for, says he, "Ephrem the Syrian is held in such veneration, that his writings are read in several churches, immediately after THE LESSONS FROM THE BIBLE. It is also well known, that the Armenian Version, which itself is ancient, was made from the Syriac.

Now, this ancient Version contains the Four Gospels, The Acts of the Apostles, The Epistles of Paul including that to the Hebrews, The First Epistle of John, The First Epistle of Peter, and the Epistle of James. Thus far then, the evidence of the present Canon is complete; and as to those books omitted in this Version except Revelation, they are few, and small, and probably were unknown to the translator; or, the evidence of their genuineness was not ascertained by him. And as it relates to Revelation, the same reasons which excluded it from so many ancient catalogues, probably operated here. It was judged to be too mysterious to be read in the churches, and by common Christians, and therefore was not put into the Volume which was read publicly in the churches.

The arguments for a Latin origin of this Version, possess, in my judgment, very little force.*

On the general evidence of the genuineness of our Canon, I would subjoin the following remarks.

1. The agreement among those who have given catalogues of the books of the New Testament, from the earliest times, is almost complete. Of thirteen catalogues to which we have referred, seven contain exactly the same books, as are now in the Canon. Three of the others differ in nothing, but the omission of the book of Revelation, for which they had a particular reason, consistent with

* On this whole subject, consult Jones on the Canon, Michaelis's Introduction, Mill's Prolegomena.

their belief of its Canonical authority ; and in two of the remaining catalogues, it can be proved, that the books omitted, or represented as doubtful, were received as authentic, by the persons who have given the catalogues. It may be asserted, therefore, that the consent of the ancient church, as to what books belonged to the Canon of the New Testament, was complete. The Sacred Volume was as accurately formed, and as clearly distinguished from other books, in the third, fourth, and fifth centuries, as it has ever been since.

2. Let it be considered, moreover, that the earliest of these catalogues was given by ORIGEN, who lived within a hundred years of the death of the Apostle John, and who by his reading, travels, and long residence in Palestine, had a full knowledge of all the transactions and writings of the church, until his own time. In connexion with this, let it be remembered, that these catalogues were drawn up by the most learned, pious, and distinguished men in the church ; or by councils ; and that the persons furnishing them, resided in different and remote parts of the world ; as for example, in Jerusalem, Cesaræa, Carthage and Hippo in Africa, Constantinople, Cyprus, Alexandria in Egypt, Italy, and Asia Minor. Thus, it appears, that the Canon was early agreed upon, and that it was every where the same ; therefore, we find the Fathers, in all their writings, appealing to the same Scriptures ; and none are charged with rejecting any Canonical book, except heretics.

3. It appears from the testimony adduced, that it was never considered necessary, that any Council or bishop, should give sanction to these books, in any other way, than as witnesses, testifying to the churches, that these were indeed the genuine writings of the apostles. These books, therefore, were never considered as deriving their authority from the Church, or from Councils, but were of complete authority as soon as published: and were delivered to the churches to be a guide and standard, in all things relating to faith and practice. The Fathers would have considered it impious, for any bishop, or Council, to pretend to add any thing to the authority of inspired books; or to claim the right to add other books to those handed down from the Apostles. The church is founded on THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS, JESUS CHRIST BEING THE CHIEF CORNER STONE; but the Sacred Scriptures are no how dependent for their authority, on any set of men, who lived since they were written.

4 We may remark, in the last place, the benignant providence of God towards his church, in causing these precious books to be written, and in watching over their preservation, in the midst of dangers and persecutions; so, that notwithstanding the malignant designs of the enemies of the church, they have all come down to us unmutilated, in the original tongue, in which they were penned by the Apostles.

Our liveliest gratitude is due to the great Head of the church for this divine treasure, from which we are permitted freely to draw, whatever is needful for our instruction and consolation. And it is our duty to prize this precious gift of divine revelation, above all price. On the Law of the Lord, we should meditate day and night. It is a perfect rule; it shines with a clear light; it exercises a salutary influence on the heart; it warns us when we are in danger; reclaims us when we go astray; and comforts us when in affliction. The word of the LORD is *more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold, sweeter also than honey, and the honey comb.* They who are destitute of this inestimable volume call for our tenderest compassion, and our exertions in circulating the Bible should never be remitted, until all are supplied with this divine treasure; but they who possess this Saered Volume, and yet neglect to study it are still more to be pitied, for they are perishing in the midst of plenty. In the midst of light, they walk in darkness. God has sent to them THE WORD OF LIFE, but they have lightly esteemed the rich gift of his love. O that their eyes were opened, that they might behold wondrous things in the Law of the Lord!

Ps. xix. 10.

SECTION III.

ORDER OF THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT—TIME OF THE GOSPELS BEING WRITTEN—NOTICE OF THE EVANGELISTS.

The order of the books of the New Testament is not uniform, in the Manuscripts, now extant; nor, as they are mentioned by the Fathers. Eusebius arranges them thus; The Four Gospels, The Acts of the Apostles, The Epistles of Paul, The First Epistle of John, and The Revelation of John. "These," says he, "were received (except the last mentioned) by all christians." Then, he mentions those which were not unanimously received; as, The Epistle of James, The Epistle of Jude, The Second of Peter, and the Second and Third of John.

Irenæus, who lived long before Eusebius, has not given a regular catalogue of the books of the New Testament, but he seems to have followed the same order.

But Athanasius, in his Festal Epistle, has given the following order; The Four Gospels, The Acts of the Apostles, The Seven Catholic Epistles, The Fourteen Epistles of Paul, and The Revelation. The ancient, and celebrated Alexandrian Manuscript follows the same order; as also

does CYRIL of Jerusalem, but he does not mention Revelation.

The arrangement in the catalogue of THE COUNCIL OF LAODICEA, is exactly the same as that of Cyril; the book of Revelation being left out.

JOHN DAMASCENE, and LEONTIUS, follow the same order.

The order of the Syrian catalogues as given by EBEDJESU, is; The Four Gospels, The Acts of the Apostles, The Three Catholic Epistles, (their Canon at first contained no more) and The Fourteen Epistles of Paul.

RUFIN's order, is; The Gospels, The Acts, Paul's Epistles, The Catholic Epistles, and The Revelation.

The COUNCIL OF CARTHAGE, has the same.

GREGORY NAZIANZEN the same; only, Revelation is omitted.

AMPHILOCHIUS the same, and the book of Revelation, mentioned as doubtful.

NICEPHORUS of Constantinople, the same, and Revelation omitted.

This, therefore, appears to have been the order, in which the books of the New Testament succeeded each other in most ancient copies; and is the one now in general use.

But EPIPHANIUS has an order different from any of these, as follows; The Four Gospels, Paul's Epistles, The Acts of the Apostles, The Seven Catholic Epistles, and the Revelation.

JEROME follows the same order; and also EUTHALIUS.

AUGUSTINE varies, in his arrangement of the Sacred books. In one place, he puts the Acts last, except Revelation; and in another, he places it after Revelation. He also varies in his arrangement of the Epistles of Paul, and of the Catholic Epistles.

The order of INNOCENT THE FIRST, bishop of Rome, is; The Four Gospels, Paul's Epistles, The Catholic Epistles, The Acts, and Revelation.

ISIDORE OF SEVILLE, has, in his writings, given several catalogues, in all of which, he pursues the order last mentioned. The same writer informs us, that the books of the New Testament were usually included in two divisions, or volumes; the first containing the Gospels; the second, The Acts and The Epistles; the book of Revelation being omitted.

CHRYSOSTOM follows an order, which appears to be peculiar: he places first, The Fourteen Epistles of Paul; next, The Four Gospels; then, the Acts; and in the last place, The Catholic Epistles.

GELASIUS places Revelation before The Catholic Epistles.

THE APOSTOLICAL CANON, as it is called, contains the following catalogue; The Four Gospels, Fourteen Epistles of Paul, Seven Catholic Epistles, Two Epistles of Clement, The Constitutions, and The Acts. If this were, indeed, the genuine Canon of the Apostles, as the title imports, it would

be decisive, and all other authorities would be superfluous; but it is acknowledged, by all good critics, that it is spurious, and of no authority in settling the early Canon.

The order of the Four Gospels has generally been, as in our copies, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. Irenæus, Origen, Eusebius, Athanasius, The council of Laodicea, Gregory Nazianzen, Amphilochius, The Syrian Catalogues, Jerome, Rufin, Augustine, The Alexandrian Manuscript with most others, agree in this order.

But that this order was not uniform, appears from Tertullian, who arranges them thus, Matthew, John, Luke, Mark. And the same order of the Gospels is followed, in the very ancient Manuscript, commonly called, CODEX CANTABRGIENSIS.

There is very little variation observed, in the arrangement of Paul's Epistles; they are generally found in the same order, as we have them in our copies; but this is not universally the case; for in some copies, The Epistle to the Hebrews occupies the Fourteenth place among Paul's Epistles, and in others the Tenth. But in all copies, The Epistle to the Romans, stands first; though not first, in the order of time.

With respect to the time, when the Gospels were written, no precise information can be obtained, as ancient authors differ considerably, on the subject. It seems to be agreed, however, that they were not published immediately after the ascension of Christ: nor, all at the same time. The

best thing which we can do, is to place before the reader, the principal testimonies of the Fathers, and leave him to judge for himself.*

The earliest writer who says any thing explicitly on this subject, is, IRENÆUS; but he does not inform us what time intervened between the resurrection of Christ, and the writing of these Gospels. His words are; "For we have not received the knowledge of the way of salvation, from any others than those by whom the Gospel has been brought to us, which Gospel they first preached, and afterwards, by the will of God, committed to writing, that for time to come it might be the foundation and pillar of our faith. Nor, may any say that they preached before they had a competent knowledge of the Gospel; for after that our Lord rose from the dead, and they were endued, from above, with the power of the Holy Ghost, which had come down upon them, they received a perfect knowledge of all things. They went forth to all the ends of the earth, declaring to men the blessing of heavenly peace; having all of them, and every one of them, the Gospel of God."

Now let it be considered, that Irenæus was the Disciple of Polycarp, who was the disciple of the apostle John, and this testimony will have great weight, in confirming the fact, that the Gospels were written by the apostles, some time after they

* The testimonies here adduced, are for the most part, selected from the Collections of Lardner, to whose works the reader is referred.

began to preach. And that, wherever the apostles went, they preached the same Gospel to the people.

Eusebius, to whom we are obliged so often to have recourse, as a witness of ancient Ecclesiastical facts, does not fail us here; "Those admirable and truly divine men," says he, "the apostles of Christ, did not attempt to deliver the doctrine of their master, with the artifice and eloquence of words. . . . Nor were they concerned about writing books, being engaged in a more excellent ministry, which is above all human power. Insomuch that Paul, the most able of all, in the furniture of words and ideas, has left nothing in writing but a few Epistles.—"Nor were the rest of our Saviour's followers unacquainted with these things, as the seventy disciples and many others, besides the twelve apostles. Nevertheless, of all the disciples of our Lord, Matthew and John only have left us any Memoirs; who, also, as we have been informed, were impelled to write, by a kind of necessity."

Theodore of Mopsuesta, who lived in the latter part of the fourth century, has left us the following testimony; "After the Lord's ascension to heaven, the disciples staid a good while at Jerusalem, visiting the cities in the vicinity, and preaching chiefly to the Jews: and the great Paul was appointed, openly to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles."

"In process of Divine Providence, they, not being allowed to confine themselves to any one part of the earth, were conducted to remote countries. Peter went to Rome; the others elsewhere. John took up his abode at Ephesus, visiting, however, other parts of Asia. . . . About this time, the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark and Luke, published their Gospels, which were soon spread over the world, and were received by all the faithful with great regard. . . . That, numerous Christians in Asia having brought these Gospels to John, earnestly entreated him to write a further account of such things as were needful to be known, and had been omitted by the rest; with which request he complied."

By divers Christian writers of antiquity, it has been asserted, that Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, at the earnest request of the brethren at Rome, wrote a short Gospel, according to what he had heard related by Peter. This testimony among others is given by JEROME, in his book of ILLUSTRIOUS MEN.

It is probable, that Peter did not visit Rome before the reign of Nero; perhaps, not until Paul had returned a second time to that city, which must have been as late as the year A. D. 63, or A. D. 64. Now, as the brethren requested of Mark, to give them in writing the substance of Peter's preaching, his gospel could not have been written, at an earlier period. And, it would seem,

if this fact be undoubted, that they had, until this time, never seen a written Gospel; and, probably, did not know that there was one in existence.

The Jewish war, according to Josephus, began in the year of our Lord 66, and ended in September, of the year 70; when the city and temple were brought to desolation. Now, there is strong probable evidence, that the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, were finished before this war commenced; that is, before the year of our Lord sixty six. Each of them contains the predictions of our Lord, respecting the destruction of Jerusalem, and there is no hint in any of them, that the remarkable events connected with this overthrow, had begun to make their appearance. But there are some expressions in these Gospels, which probably indicate, that the writers thought, that these wonderful events were at hand. Such as the following admonition, *let him that readeth, understand.*

It is certain, that the Acts of the Apostles could not have been finished before A. D. 62, or 63, because the history which it contains comes down to that time. The Gospel by Luke, was probably written a short time before. At least, this seems to be the common opinion of learned men. Jerome supposes, that he composed his Gospel at Rome: Grotius thinks, that when Paul left Rome, Luke went into Greece, and there wrote his Gospel and the Acts.

From the introduction to Luke's gospel, it would seem, that he knew nothing of any authentic, written gospel at that time; for he cannot be supposed to refer to such, when he says, *Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us;* and if he had known that Matthew had written a gospel, he could not easily have avoided some reference to it in this place. But the inference of Lardner from this fact, that no authentic gospel had been written before this time, is unauthorized, and repugnant to all the testimony which we have on the subject. The gospel of Matthew might have been circulating for some time among the churches in Judea, and yet not be known to Luke whose labours and travels led him, in company with Paul, to visit the Gentile countries and cities. If we pay any regard to the opinions of those, who lived nearest the times of the Apostles, we must believe, that the Gospel of Matthew was first written, and in the vernacular dialect of Judea, commonly called Hebrew. The writer of this gospel is also called Levi, the son of Alpheus. He was a Galilean, by nation, and a Publican by profession. When called to follow Christ, he was sitting at the receipt of custom, where the taxes were paid, but he immediately left all these temporal concerns, and attached himself to Christ, who afterwards selected him as one of the Twelve. From this time he seems to have

been constantly with Christ until his crucifixion, of which event he was doubtless a witness; as he was also of the resurrection and ascension of his Lord. On the day of Pentecost, he was present with his brethren, and partook of the rich spiritual endowments, which were then bestowed on the apostles. But, afterwards, there is no explicit mention of him in the New Testament. In his own catalogue of the Twelve, his name occupies the eighth place, as it does in the Acts; but in the lists of the apostles, contained in the gospels of Luke and Mark, it occupies the seventh place.

There is an almost total obscurity, resting on the history of this Apostle and Evangelist. The scene of his labours, after he left Judea, seems to have been in regions, of which we possess very little accurate information to this day. But whether he had Parthia and Persia, or Ethiopia, for the field of his apostolical labours, the ancients are not agreed. It is by no means impossible that he should have preached the gospel, and planted churches, in each of these countries. The historian Socrates in his distribution of the apostles among the countries of the globe, assigns Ethiopia to Matthew, Parthia to Thomas, and India to Bartholomew.

The testimony of Eusebius is as follows; "This then was the state of the Jews, but the apostles and disciples of our Lord, being dispersed abroad,

preached in the whole world, Thomas in Parthia; Andrew in Sythia; John in Asia, who having lived there a long time, died at Ephesus. Peter preached to the dispersed Jews, in Pontus, Galatia, Bythinia, Cappadocia, and Asia; at length, coming to Rome, he was there crucified, with his head turned down towards the earth, at his own request. Paul also died a martyr at Rome, as we are informed by Origen, in the third Tome of his work on Genesis." But Eusebius makes no mention of the apostle Mathew; nor does JEROME, in his account of Illustrious Men.

CLEMENT of Alexandria mentions a circumstance of this apostle's mode of life, but nothing more; he says, "That he was accustomed to use a very spare diet, eating vegetables, but no flesh."

CHRYSOSTOM, in one of his Homilies, gives the character of Matthew, but furnishes us with no facts.

It is probable, therefore, that very little was known in the West, respecting the lives, labours, and death, of those apostles who travelled far to the East. None of them, it is probable, ever returned; and there existed no regular channels for the communication of intelligence, from those distant regions. The honour of martyrdom has been given to them all, and the thing is not improbable, but there are no authentic records, from which we can derive any certain information on this subject. The Fathers, whose writings have come down to us, seem

to have been as much in the dark as we are, respecting the preaching and death, of the majority of the apostles. There are, it is true, traditions in Ethiopia and the East, in regard to some of them, but they are too uncertain to deserve any serious consideration.

SECTION IV.

TESTIMONIES TO MATTHEW'S GOSPEL—TIME OF PUBLICATION—LANGUAGE IN WHICH IT WAS ORIGINALLY COMPOSED.

But while we know so little of the apostolical labours of the Evangelist Matthew, it is pleasing to find that the testimonies respecting the genuineness of his gospel, are so early and full. To these we will now direct our attention.

PAPIAS, bishop of Hierapolis, who was acquainted with the apostle John, expressly mentions Matthew's gospel; and asserts, "That he wrote the divine oracles in Hebrew."

IRENÆUS, bishop of Lyons, who was born in Asia, and was acquainted with Polycarp, the disciple of the apostle John, gives the following testimony; "Matthew, then among the Jews, wrote a gospel in their language, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome . . . . And after their decease, Mark, also the disciple of Peter, delivered to us the things which had been preached by Peter; and Luke, the companion of Paul, put down in a book, the gospel preached by him. Afterwards, John, who leaned on his Lord's breast, published a gospel for the inhabitants of Asia."

In another place he says, "The gospel of Matthew was delivered to the Jews."

ORIGEN, who was born in the second century, and wrote and flourished, in the beginning of the third, has left us the following testimony, "According to the traditions received by me, the first gospel was written by Matthew, once a publican, afterwards a disciple of Jesus Christ, who delivered it to the Jewish believers, composed in the Hebrew language."

And in another place he says, "Matthew wrote for the Hebrews."

EUSEBIUS, who lived about a hundred years later than Origen, informs us, that, "Matthew having first preached the gospel to the Hebrews, when about to go to other people, delivered to them, in their own language, the gospel written by himself; by that supplying the want of his presence with them, whom he was about to leave."

In the Synopsis, which has been ascribed to ATHANASIUS, it is said, "Matthew wrote his gospel in the Hebrew, and published it at Jerusalem."

CYRIL of Jerusalem testifies, "That Mathew wrote in Hebrew."

EPIPHANIUS says the same, and adds, "Matthew wrote first, and Mark soon after him, being a follower of Peter at Rome."

GREGORY NAZIANZEN, "That Matthew wrote for the Hebrews."

Ebedjesu, the Syrian, "That Matthew, the first Evangelist, published his gospel, in Palestine, written in Hebrew."

Jerome, in his Commentary on Matthew, testifies, that "The first Evangelist is Matthew, the Publican, surnamed Levi, who wrote his gospel in Judea, in the Hebrew language, chiefly for the Jews, who believed in Jesus, and did not join the shadow of the Law with the truth of the gospel."

Again, in his book of Ecclesiastical Writers, he says, "Matthew, called also Levi, of a Publican made an apostle, first of all wrote a gospel in the Hebrew language, for the sake of those in Judea who believed. By whom it was afterwards translated into Greek is uncertain."

Chrysostom, in his Introduction to this gospel, writes, "Matthew is said to have written his gospel at the request of the Jewish believers, who desired him to put down in writing, what he had said to them by word of mouth; and it is said, he wrote in Hebrew."

It would be unnecessary to adduce any testimonies from later writers; but as they mention some circumstances, probably received by tradition, and not contained in the earlier testimonies, I will subjoin a few of them.

Cosmas, who lived in the sixth century, reports, that "Matthew is the first that wrote a gospel. A persecution having arisen after the stoning of Stephen, and he having resolved to go from that place, the

believers entreated him, to leave with them a written instruction; with which request he complied."

Another author of this century, who wrote a discourse on Matthew, has left this testimony, "The occasion of Matthew's writing is said to have been this, there being a great persecution in Palestine, so that there was danger lest the faithful should be dispersed; that they might not be without teaching, they requested Matthew to write for them an accurate history of all Christ's words and works; that whereever they should be, they might have with them the ground of their faith."

In the PASCHAL CHRONICLE, written in the seventh century, it is intimated, that Matthew published his gospel, about fifteen years after our Lord's ascension.

EUTHYMIUS, in the beginning of the twelfth century, says, "That this gospel was first written in the Hebrew language, for the Jewish believers, eight years after our Lord's ascension."

From these testimonies, it appears, that the Fathers had no certain knowledge of the exact time when Matthew wrote his gospel. Irenæus refers it to the period when Paul and Peter were preaching at Rome, but he speaks vaguely on the subject.

The writers who mention a precise time, lived at too late a period to give testimony on this subject. But all agree, that this was the first gospel written.

Among the moderns, there is much diversity of opinion, as might be expected, where there is little else than conjecture to guide them.

Lardner and Basnage supposed that this gospel was not written before A. D. 64.

Cave thought that it was written fifteen years after the ascension of Christ.

Jer. Jones is in favour of that opinion, which places it eight years after the ascension.

Grotius and G. J. Vossius are of the same opinion. So also is Wetstein.

But, Tillemont carries it up to the third year after the crucifixion of our Saviour.*

Lardner and Percy have adduced arguments for a late origin of this gospel, derived from internal evidence, but they are of very inconsiderable weight.

As it is agreed that it was written before Matthew left Judea to preach the gospel in foreign parts, and as this event seems to have occurred after the persecution which was raised in Judea, against the church, it seems probable, that they are nearest the truth, who place it about eight years after the ascension of Christ; which date unites more writers in its support than any other.

Not only the date, but the original language of this gospel has been made a subject of controversy. By the testimonies already cited, it seems

* Tomline, Townson, Horne, Townsend, &c. plead for an early origin of this Gospel, referring it to A.D. 36, or A.D. 37.

that there was but one opinion among the ancients, in regard to this matter. With one voice they inform us, that it was written in Hebrew; or in the vernacular tongue of the Jews, which in the Scriptures, and by the Christian Fathers, is called Hebrew. This language is now called Syro-Chaldaic, or Western Aramean, but it consisted chiefly of words derived from a Hebrew origin, and was in fact, the Hebrew corrupted by a large mixture of foreign words, and by various changes in the prefixes and affixes of the words. This was the language in which Jesus Christ spoke, and delivered all his discourses; and which the apostles were accustomed to speak, from their childhood.

Although the Greek language was understood by all the learned in Judea, at this time, and by many of the people, yet it was not the vernacular language of the Jews, dwelling in Palestine. In a book composed for the immediate use of the churches in Judea, it was necessary, that it should be in that language which they all understood; which was neither pure Hebrew, nor Greek. The testimony of the Fathers, is therefore strengthened by a consideration of the nature of the case. And if it were not so, yet when the judgment of modern critics stands opposed to the universal testimony of the ancients, in regard to a matter of fact, which occurred not long before their time, there ought to be no hesitation which is most deserving of credit.

There is, however, one difficulty attending this

opinion, which is, that it supposes that the original of this gospel is lost, and that we have nothing but a translation, which opinion would lessen its Canonical authority.

It must be confessed, that this is a consequence of a serious kind, and one which ought not to be received respecting any Canonical book, without necessity. But does this conclusion necessarily follow from the admission, that this gospel was originally composed in the Hebrew language? Might there not have been a version immediately prepared by the writer himself, or by some other person under his superintendence? This being the first gospel, that was composed, it would naturally be in great request, with all Christians who knew of its existence, and as none but the Jewish Christians could understand it, as first published, it is exceedingly probable, that a request was made of the author to publish an edition of it in Greek also, by those who did not understand the Hebrew; or by such as were going to preach the Gospel in countries where the Greek language was in common use.

It has been considered a strong objection to the Hebrew original of this Gospel, that no person, whose writings have come down to us, has intimated that he had ever seen it; and from the earliest times it seems to have existed in the Greek language. But this fact is perfectly accordant with the supposition now made; for, the desolation

of Judea, and dispersion of the Jewish Christians, having taken place within a few years after the publication of Matthew's Gospel, the copies of the original Hebrew would be confined to the Jewish converts, and as other Christians had copies in the Greek, of equal authenticity with the Hebrew, no inquiries would be made after the latter. These Jewish Christians, after their removal, dwindled away in a short time, and a large part of them became erroneous in their faith; and though they retained the Hebrew Gospel of Matthew, they altered and corrupted it, to suit their own heretical opinions. There is reason to believe, that the Gospel of the Nazarenes was the identical Gospel of Matthew, which in process of time, was greatly mutilated and corrupted by the Ebionites. Of this Gospel much is said by the Fathers, and in the proper place we shall give some accouut of it.

The only remaining objection, of any weight, against the ancient opinion, is, that the Gospel according to Matthew, as we now have it, has no appearance of being a translation, but has the air and style of an original. But if the hypothesis, suggested above, be adopted, this objection also will vanish; for according to this, the Greek is an original as well as the Hebrew, it having been written by Matthew himself, or by some disciple under his direction. But whether the Greek of St. Matthew, was written by himself or not, it is

certain, that it was not later than the Apostolic age, and received the approbation of apostles or Apostolic men, which is sufficient to establish its authenticity.*

* The learned world have been nearly equally divided on the question, whether Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew or Greek. In favour of the former opinion, may be cited, Bellarmine, Grotius, Casaubon, Walton, Tomline, Cave, Hammond, Mill, Harwood, Owen, Campbell, A. Clarke, Simon, Tillemont, Pritius, Du Pin, Calmet, Michaelis, and others. In favour of the Greek origin of this Gospel the names are not less numerous, nor less respectable. Among these may be mentioned, Erasmus, Paræus, Calvin, Le Clerc, Fabricius, Pfeiffer, Lightfoot, Beausobre, Basnage, Wetstein, Rumpœus, Whitby, Edelman, Hoffman, Moldenhawer Viser, Harles, Jones, Jortin, Lardner, Hey, Hales, Hewlett, and others.

The two opinions were supported by a weight of argument and authority, so nearly balanced, that Dr. Townson, and a few others, have adopted a middle course, viz; the opinion stated above, that there were two originals; by which theory all difficulties are removed. The only objection is, the want of evidence. Horne, and Townsend have adopted this opinion. See Horne's Introd. Vol. iv. Part ii. c. ii. Sec. ii. p. 267.

SECTION V.

GOSPEL OF MARK—ON WHAT OCCASION PUBLISHED—ASCRIBED TO THE DICTATION OF PETER, BY ALL THE FATHERS.

The author of the second Gospel, as they stand in the Canon, was Mark; the same who is mentioned in the First Epistle of Peter, v. 13; but whether he was the same as John Mark, of Jerusalem, who travelled for a while with Paul and Barnabas, has been doubted by Grotius, Cave, Dupin, and Tillemont; but the common opinion is in its favour, and the objections to it, are not of much weight: and as there is no clear evidence, that there were two persons of this name, mentioned in Scripture, I shall consider all that is said of Mark, as having reference to the same person.

Paul was offended at him because he declined accompanying him and Barnabas on the whole tour which they took, to preach the Gospel; for, when they came to Perga, Mark departed from them, and returned to Jerusalem. And when Paul and Barnabas were about to undertake a second journey, together, the latter insisted on taking Mark, as their minister, but Paul, would by no means consent to it, because he had forsaken them on their first mission. This difference of opinion gave rise

to a sharp altercation, which terminated in the separation of these venerable colleagues. Mark now travelled with Barnabas, but probably, soon afterwards attached himself to Peter, with whom he seems to have continued until the death of that apostle.

But Paul himself seems to have been reconciled to Mark, and to have valued his assistance, in the work of the ministry; for, in his second Epistle to Timothy, he writes, "*Take Mark and bring him with thee for he is profitable unto me for the ministry.*" He also mentions him in his Epistle to Philemon.

When this gospel was composed, has not been particularly mentioned by any ancient author, except that it is said to have been after Peter came to Rome, which could not be much earlier than A. D. 62, or A. D. 63. It is stated, that Mark was requested by the brethren at Rome to put down in writing the substance of Peter's preaching; and on this account, this Gospel among the primitive Christians was as familiarly know by the name of the Gospel of Peter, as of Mark. This circumstance has led some to assert that Mark wrote his Gospel in Latin, as this was the language of Rome; but in those days, almost all the Romans, understood Greek; and the Jewish converts who composed a large portion of the first churches, understood Greek much better than Latin. But

2 Tim. iv. 11. Phil. 24.

there is no need to argue this point. There is no ancient author who testifies that Mark wrote in Latin. The testimony is uniform, that he wrote in Greek.

Baronius is almost the only learned man who has advocated the Latin original of the Gospel of Mark, and he has nothing to produce in favour of this opinion, from antiquity, except the subscription to the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions of the New Testament, where, at the end of Mark's Gospel, it is said, "He spoke and preached in Latin at Rome," but this does not say that he wrote his Gospel in Latin.

But these subscriptions are of very little authority in matters of this kind. No one knows when, or by whom, they were placed there: and although three versions are mentioned, they make up no more than one witness, for probably all the others borrowed this inscription from the Syriac.

Augustine called Mark the abridger of Matthew; and it must be confessed, that he often uses the same words, and tells more concisely what the other had related more copiously; yet there is satisfactory evidence, that Mark's Gospel is an original work. There are many things which are not in the Gospel of Matthew, and some, mentioned by that Evangelist, are here related with additional circumstances.

All authors do not agree that Mark wrote his Gospel at Rome, but some think at Alexandria:

the former opinion, however, was received by the Fathers, with almost universal consent.

Some of the testimonies of the Fathers respecting this Gospel, will now be given.

Eusebius, out of Papias and a lost work of Clement of Alexandria, relates, "That when Peter, in the reign of Claudius, had come to Rome, and had defeated Simon Magus, the people were so inflamed with love for the Christian truths, as not to be satisfied with the hearing of them, unless they also had them written down. That, accordingly, they, with earnest entreaties, applied themselves to Mark, the companion of Peter, and whose Gospel we now have, praying him that he would write down for them and leave with them, an account of the doctrines which had been preached to them: that they did not desist in their request, till they had prevailed on him, and procured his writing that, which is now the Gospel of Mark. That when Peter came to know this, he was, by the direction of the Holy Spirit, pleased with the request of the people, and confirmed the Gospel which was written for the use of the Churches."*

The same Eusebius relates, in another part of his works, what Papias had testified concerning Mark's Gospel, "That Mark, who was Peter's interpreter, exactly wrote down whatsoever he remembered, though not in the same order of time

* Ecc. Hist. Lib. II. c. 25.

in which the several things were said or done by Christ; for he neither heard nor followed Christ, but was a companion of Peter, and composed his Gospel, rather with the intent of the people's profit, than writing a regular history; so that he is in no fault, if he wrote some things according to his memory, he designing no more than to omit nothing which he had heard, and to relate nothing false."*

Another testimony, from CLEMENT of Alexandria, is given by Eusebius, in which it is said, "When Peter was publicly preaching the Gospel at Rome, by the influences of the Holy Spirit many of the converts desired Mark, as having been a long companion of Peter, and who well remembered what he preached, to write down his discourses: that upon this he composed his Gospel, and gave it to those who made this request, which when Peter knew, he neither obstructed nor encouraged the work."†

IRENÆUS says, "That after the death of Peter and Paul, who had been preaching at Rome, Mark the disciple and interpreter of Peter wrote down what he had heard him preach."

Tertullian informs us, "That the Gospel published by Mark may be reckoned Peter's, whose interpreter he was."

ORIGEN adds, "That Mark wrote his Gospel according to the dictates of Peter."

* Ecc. Hist. Lib. iii. c. 39. † Lib. vi. c. 14.

Jerome tells us, "That Mark the disciple and interpreter of Peter, wrote a short Gospel, from what he had heard of Peter, at the request of the brethren at Rome, which when Peter knew, he approved, and published it in our churches, commanding the reading of it by his own authority."

Besides these testimonies which are very explicit and all go to show, that Mark received his Gospel from the preaching of Peter, there are some internal evidences which look the same way. There are in the other Evangelists several circumstances and facts which make very much for the credit of Peter, not one of which is hinted at in this Gospel. Particular instances of this kind may be read, in the Third Volume of Jones on the Canon.

Of the Canonical authority of this Gospel, no one of the ancients, I believe, ever entertained a doubt. Some of the moderns, however, have questioned whether we have any evidence, that Mark and Luke wrote by a plenary inspiration, since they were not apostles. But that Mark's Gospel is Canonical, is established by all the rules applicable to the case. It was always contained in the early catalogues; was read as Scripture in the churches; was quoted as Scripture by the Fathers; was inserted in the earliest versions; and never doubted formerly, by any christian writer. But this subject will be resumed, hereafter.

Eusebius reports, "That Peter, out of the abundance of his modesty, did not think himself

worthy to write a Gospel; but Mark, who was his friend and disciple, is said to have recorded Peter's relations, and the acts of Jesus." And again, "Peter testifies these things of himself, for all things recorded by Mark, are said to be memoirs of Peter's discourses."

In the Synopsis, ascribed to Athanasius, it is said, "That the Gospel according to Mark was dictated by Peter, at Rome, and published by Mark; and preached by him in Alexandria, Pentapolis, and Lybia."

The testimony of EPIPHANIUS is, "That Matthew wrote first, and Mark soon after him, being a companion of Peter, at Rome;—that Mark was one of the seventy disciples, and likewise one of those who were offended at the words of Christ, recorded in the sixth chapter of the Gospel of John;—that he then forsook the Saviour, but was afterwards reclaimed by Peter, and being filled with the Spirit, wrote a Gospel."

GREGORY NAZIANZEN says, "That Mark wrote his Gospel for the Italians."

CHRYSOSTOM testifies, that "Mark wrote in Egypt at the request of the believers there;" but in another place, he says, "It cannot be ascertained in what place each of the Evangelists wrote."

VICTOR informs us, "That Mark was also called John, and was the son of Mary;—that he wrote a Gospel after Matthew;—that for a while he accompanied Paul, and Barnabas his relation, but

when he came to Rome, he joined Peter. When he was obliged to quit Rome, he was requested by the brethren to write a history of his preaching, and of his heavenly doctrine; with which request he readily complied."

Cosmas of Alexandria, writes, "That Mark the second Evangelist, wrote a Gospel at Rome, by the dictation of Peter."

Œcumenius says, "This John, who also is called Mark, nephew to Barnabas, wrote the Gospel which goes by his name; and was also the disciple of Peter."

Theophylact informs us, "That the Gospel according to Mark, was written at Rome, ten years after the ascension of Jesus Christ, at the request of the believers there; for, this Mark was a disciple of Peter. His name was John, and he was nephew to Barnabas, the companion of Paul."

Euthymius concurs exactly in this testimony. His words are, "The Gospel of Mark was written about ten years after our Lord's ascension, at the request of the believers at Rome; or as some say, in Egypt;—that Mark was, at first, much with his uncle Barnabas, and Paul, but afterwards went with Peter to Rome, from whom he received the whole history of his Gospel."

Nicephorus says, "Only two of the Twelve have left memoirs of our Lord's life, and two of the Seventy, Mark and Luke." And a little after,

"Mark and Luke published their Gospels, by the direction of Peter and Paul."

Eutychius, patriarch of Alexandria, has the following words, "In the time of Nero, Peter the prince of the apostles, making use of Mark, wrote a Gospel at Rome, in the Roman language."

The reader will recollect, that this last writer lived as late as the tenth century, which will account for his calling Peter the prince of the apostles, a language entirely foreign to the early Ecclesiastical writers. And Selden is of opinion, that by the Roman language, he meant the Greek, which was then in common use, at Rome; and it is well known, that in our times, the modern Greek language, is called, *Romaic*. Jones and Lardner concur in the opinion of Selden.

SECTION VI.

GOSPEL OF LUKE—TESTIMONIES OF THE FATHERS RESPECTING IT.

The Third Gospel is that of Luke. He is mentioned in Scripture, as the companion of Paul, in his travels: and when that apostle was sent a prisoner to Rome, this evangelist accompanied him, and continued with him during his two year's confinement in that city, as may be gathered from Paul's Epistles, written during this period. Whether he was the same as *The beloved physician*, mentioned by Paul, is uncertain, but the general opinion is in favour of it. It is also disputed, whether or not he was one of the Seventy disciples. Without undertaking to decide these points, I will proceed to lay before the reader, the principal testimonies of the Fathers, respecting this gospel and its author.

IRENÆUS asserts, "That Luke the companion of Paul, put down in a book, the gospel preached by him." Again, he says, "Luke was not only a companion, but a fellow labourer of the apostles, especially of Paul." He calls him, "A disciple and fellow labourer of the apostles." "The apostles," says he, "envying none, plainly delivered to all,

the things which they had heard from the Lord. So likewise Luke envying no man, has delivered to us what he learned from them, as he says, *Even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of his word.*"

EUSEBIUS informs us, that CLEMENT of Alexandria bore a large testimony to this, as well as to the other gospels; and he mentions a tradition concerning the order of the gospels, which Clement had received from presbyters of more ancient times, "That the gospels containing the genealogies, were written first."

TERTULLIAN speaks of Matthew and John as disciples of Christ; of Mark and Luke as disciples of the apostles; however, he ascribes the same authority to the gospels written by them, as to the others. "The gospel," says he, "which Mark published, may be said to be Peter's, whose interpreter Mark was; and Luke's digest, is often ascribed to Paul. And indeed it is easy to take that for the Master's which the disciples published." Again, "Moreover, Luke was not an apostle, but an apostolic man; not a master, but a disciple: certainly less than his master; certainly so much later, as he is a follower of Paul, the last of the apostles."

ORIGEN mentions the gospels in the order commonly received, "The third," says he, "is that according to Luke, the gospel commended by Paul, published for the sake of the Gentile converts."

In his commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, which we now have in a Latin version only, he writes, "Some say Lucius is Lucas the Evangelist, as indeed it is not uncommon to write names, sometimes according to the original form; sometimes, according to the Greek, and Roman termination."

Eusebius has left us the following testimony, concerning Luke the evangelist, "And Luke who was of Antioch, and by profession a physician, for the most part a companion of Paul, who had, likewise, more than a slight acquaintance with the other apostles, has left us, in two books, divinely inspired, evidences of the art of healing souls, which he had learned from them. One of them, is, the gospel which he professeth to have written, as they delivered it to him, who, from the beginning, were eye-witnesses and ministers of his word." With all whom, he says, he had been perfectly acquainted, from the first. And in another place, he says, "Luke hath delivered, in his gospel, a certain account of such things as he had been assured of by his intimate acquaintance and familiarity with Paul, and his conversation with the other apostles."

In the synopsis, ascribed to Athanasius, it is said, "That the gospel of Luke was dictated by the apostle Paul, and written and published by the blessed apostle and physician Luke."

Gregory Nazianzen says, "That Luke wrote for the Greeks;" and Gregory Nyssen, "That

Luke was as much a physician for the soul as the body."

The testimony of JEROME, concerning Luke, is as follows: "Luke, who was of Antioch, and by profession a physician, not unskilful in the Greek language, a disciple of the apostle Paul, and the constant companion of his travels, wrote a gospel, and another excellent volume entitled, the Acts of the Apostles . . . . It is supposed that Luke did not learn his gospel from the apostle Paul only, who had not conversed with the Lord in the flesh, but also from other apostles, which likewise he owns, at the beginning of his volume, saying, *Even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word.* Therefore, he wrote the gospel from the information of others; but the Acts he composed from his own knowledge.*

The same writer, in the preface to his commentary on St. Matthew, says, "The third evangelist is Luke, the physician, a Syrian of Antioch, who was a disciple of the apostle Paul, and published his gospel in the countries of Achaia and Bœotia."

In another place, he observes, "That some said that Luke had been a proselyte to Judaism, before his conversion to Christianity."

CHRYSOSTOM, in his first homily on the gospel of

* Book of Illustrious Men

Matthew, has this remark: "Luke had the fluency of Paul, Mark the conciseness of Peter, both learning of their masters."

ISIDORE of Seville says, "Of the four evangelists, the first and last relate what they had heard Christ say, or had seen him perform Matthew wrote his gospel first, in Judea; then Mark in Italy; Luke, the third, in Achaia: John, the last, in Asia." And again, of all the evangelists, Luke, the third in order, is reckoned to have been the most skilful in the Greek tongue. For he was a physician, and wrote his gospel in Greek.

In THEOPHYLACT's preface to St. Matthew's Gospel, it is said, "There are four Evangelists, two of which, Matthew and John, were of the apostles; the other two, Mark and Luke, were of the number of the Seventy. Mark was a disciple and companion of Peter, Luke of Paul . . . . Luke wrote fifteen years after Christ's ascension."

In his commentary on Luke, he observes, "That it appears from Luke's Introduction, that he was not from the beginning a disciple, but only afterwards. For others were disciples from the beginning, as Peter, and the sons of Zebedee, who delivered to him the things which they had seen or heard."

EUTHYMIUS says, "Luke was a native of Antioch, and a physician. He was a hearer of Christ, and as some say, one of his Seventy disciples, as well as Mark. He was afterwards very intimate with Paul

He wrote his Gospel, with Paul's permission, fifteen years after our Lord's ascension."

Eutychius, patriarch of Constantinople, has handed down the following account: "In the time of the same emperor (Nero) Luke wrote his gospel in Greek, to a notable and wise man of the Romans, whose name was Theophilus; to whom also he wrote the Acts, or the history of the disciples. The evangelist Luke, was a companion of the apostle Paul, going with him, wherever he went. For which reason, the apostle Paul, in one of his epistles, says, *Luke the physician salutes you.*"

The same arguments by which the Canonical authority of the gospels of Matthew and Mark were established, apply with their full force to the gospel of Luke. It was universally received as Canonical by the whole primitive church; has a place, in every catalogue of the books of the New Testament which was ever published; is constantly referred to and cited by the Fathers, as a part of Sacred Scripture; and was one of the books constantly read in the churches, as a part of the rule of faith and practice for all believers.

Marcion, the heretic, it is true, had a gospel according to Luke, which differed essentially from that in the Canon, but his authority has no weight.

SECTION VII.

THE OBJECTIONS OF J. D. MICHAELIS, TO THE CANONICAL AUTHORITY OF THE GOSPELS OF MARK AND LUKE, CONSIDERED, AND ANSWERED.

J. D. Michaelis, in his Introduction to the New Testament, as translated from the German, by Bishop Marsh, in the Third Section of the Third Chapter, speaking of the gospels of St. Mark and St Luke, and of the Acts of the Apostles, and of the grounds of placing them in the Canon, says, "I must confess that I am unable to find a satisfactory proof of their inspiration, and the more I investigate the subject, and the oftener I compare their writings with those of St. Matthew, and St. John, the greater are my doubts." He then goes on to say, that in a former edition of this work, he had stated the arguments on both sides of the question, but although uncertain which he should prefer, yet he had rather inclined to the affirmative. But now, he tells us, that he is strongly inclined to the negative.

The first argument for the inspiration of these gospels, which the learned professor considers, is derived from the fact, that Mark and Luke were companions and assistants of the apostles. This, he

can afford no proof of their inspiration, even if it could be shown that they were endowed with the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, of which, however, there is no historical proof. Because a disciple might possess these gifts, and yet his writings not be inspired. And if we ground the argument for their inspiration on the character of an apostle's assistant, then we must receive as Canonical the genuine Epistle of Clement of Rome, and the writings of other apostolical Fathers.

The next argument which he considers, is, that the apostles themselves have recommended these gospels as Canonical, in their Epistles. That the passages depended on for proof do refer to these or any other written gospels, the professor denies: but even if they did, he considers the evidence unsatisfactory; for he supposes that they might have commended a book as containing genuine historical accounts, without vouching for its inspiration.

The testimony of the Fathers, that these gospels were approved by Peter and Paul, respectively; and, with Matthew's gospel were shown to the apostle John, the learned professor sets aside with very little ceremony.

And finally, he demurs, in regard to the evidence of the Canonical authority of these books, derived from the testimony of the whole primitive church, by which they were undoubtedly received into the Canon; and suggests that the apostles might have recommended them, and the primitive

church have accepted them, as works indispensable to a Christian, on account of the importance of their contents, and that by insensible degrees they acquired the character of being inspired.

On these reasonings and objections, against the inspiration and Canonical authority of several important books, which have hitherto held an unquestioned place, in the Canon of the New Testament, and coming from the pen of a man too, of such extensive Biblical learning, I think it necessary to detain the reader with some remarks, which I hope will have the effect of counteracting the pernicious influence of the opinions, which have been exhibited above.

1. In the first place, then, I would observe, that it will be admitted, that Mark and Luke were humble, pious men; also, that they were intelligent, well-informed men, and must have known that the committing to writing the facts and doctrines comprehended in the gospel, was not left to the discretion or caprice of every disciple, but became the duty of those only, who were inspired by the Holy Ghost to undertake the work. Now, if these two disciples had been uninspired, or not under the immediate direction of apostles who possessed plenary inspiration, it would have argued great presumption in them, without any direction, to write gospels for the instruction of the church. The very fact of their writing is, therefore, a strong evidence, that they believed themselves to be inspired.

There is then little force in the remark of the learned professor, that neither St. Mark nor St. Luke have declared, in any part of their writings, that they were inspired: for such a declaration was unnecessary; their conduct in undertaking to write such books, is the best evidence that they believed themselves called to this work.

And the objection to this argument, from the writings of other apostolical men, is not valid; for none of them ever undertook to write GOSPELS, for the use of the church. All attempts at writing other Gospels, than THE FOUR, were considered by the primitive church, as impious; because, the writers were uninspired men.

2. But the universal reception of these books by the whole primitive church, as canonical, and that, while some of the apostles were living, is the evidence which to my mind is conclusive, that they were not mere human productions, but composed by divine inspiration. That they were thus universally received, I think is manifest, from the testimonies which have already been adduced. There is not in all the writings of antiquity, a hint, that any Christian belonging to the church, ever suspected that these Gospels were inferior in authority to the others. No books in the Canon appear to have been received with more universal consent, and to have been less disputed. They are contained in every catalogue, which has come down to us. They are cited as Scripture, by all that men-

tion them; and are expressly declared by the Fathers, to be Canonical and inspired books. Now, let it be remembered, that this is the best evidence which we can have that any of the books of the New Testament were written by inspiration. I know, indeed, that Michaelis places the whole proof of inspiration on the promise made by Christ to his apostles; but while it is admitted that this is a weighty consideration, it does not appear to us to be equal in force to the testimony of the Universal Church, including the apostles themselves, that these writings were penned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; for it is not perfectly clear, that the promise referred to was confined to the twelve. Certainly, Paul, who was not of that number, was inspired in a plenary manner, and much the larger part of the twelve never wrote any thing for the Canon. There is nothing in the New Testament which forbids our supposing, that other disciples might have been selected to write for the use of the church. We do not wish that this should be believed, in regard to any persons, without evidence, but we think that the proof exists, and arises from the undeniable fact, that the writings of these two men were, from the beginning, received as inspired. And this belief must have prevailed before the death of the apostles; for all the testimonies concur in stating, that the gospel of Mark was seen by Peter, and that of Luke by Paul, and approved by them respectively. Now is it credi-

ble that these apostles, and John who survived them many years, would have recommended to the Christian church, the productions of uninspired men? No doubt, all the churches, at that time, looked up to the apostles for guidance, in all matters that related to the rule of their faith, and a general opinion that these gospels were Canonical, could not have obtained, without their concurrence. The hypothesis of Michaelis, that they were recommended as useful human productions, and by degrees came to be considered as inspired writings, is in itself improbable, and repugnant to all the testimony which has come down to us on the subject. If this had been the fact, they would never have been placed among the books, universally acknowledged, but would have been doubted of, or disputed by some. The difference made between inspired books, and others, in those primitive times, was as great as at any subsequent period; and the line of distinction was not only broad, but great pains were taken to have it drawn accurately; and when the common opinion of the church, respecting the gospels, was formed, there was no difficulty in coming to the certain knowledge of the truth. For thirty years and more, before the death of the apostle John, these two gospels were in circulation. If any doubt had existed respecting their Canonical authority, would not the churches and their Elders have had recourse to this infallible authority? The general agreement of all Christians,

over the whole world, respecting most of the books of the New Testament, doubtless, should be attributed to the authority of the apostles. If, then, these Gospels had been mere human productions, they might have been read privately, but never could have found a place in the Sacred Canon. The objection to these books comes entirely too late to be entitled to any weight. The opinion of a modern critic, however learned, is of small consideration, when opposed to the testimony of the whole primitive church; and to the suffrage of the universal church, in every age, since the days of the apostles. The rule of the learned Huet, already cited, is sound, viz. "That all those books should be deemed Canonical and inspired, which were received as such, by those who lived nearest to the time when they were published."

3. But if we should, for the sake of argument, concede, that no books should be considered as inspired, but such as were the productions of apostles, still these gospels would not be excluded from the Canon. It is a fact, in which there is a wonderful agreement among the Fathers, that Mark wrote his gospel from the mouth of Peter; that is, he wrote down what he had heard this apostle every day declaring, in his public ministry. And Luke did the same, in regard to Paul's preaching. These gospels therefore, may, according to this testimony, be considered, as more probably belonging to these two apostles, than to the Evange-

lists who penned them. They were little more, it would seem, if we give full credit to the testimony which has been exhibited, than amanuenses to the apostles, on whom they attended. Paul, we know, dictated several of his Epistles to some of his companions; and if Mark and Luke heard the gospel from Peter and Paul, so often repeated, that they were perfect masters of their respective narratives, and then committed the same to writing, are they not, virtually, the productions of these apostles which have been handed down to us? And this was so much the opinion of some of the Fathers, that they speak of Mark's gospel, as Peter's, and of Luke's, as Paul's.

But this is not all. These gospels were shown to these apostles, and received their approbation. Thus speak the ancients, as with one voice, and if they had been silent, we might be certain, from the circumstances of the case, that these Evangelists would never have ventured to take such an important step, as to write and publish the preaching of these inspired men, without their express approbation. Now, let it be considered, that a narrative prepared by a man well acquainted with the facts related, may be entirely correct without inspiration; but of this we cannot be sure, and therefore, it is of great importance to have a history of facts from men, who were rendered infallible by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It should be remembered, however, that the only

advantage of inspiration in giving such a narrative, consists in the proper selection of facts and circumstances, and in the infallible certainty of the writing. Suppose, then, that an uninspired man should prepare an account of such transactions as he had seen, or heard from eye-witnesses, of undoubted veracity, and that his narrative should be submitted to the inspection of an apostle, and receive his full approbation; might not such a book be considered as inspired? If in the original composition, there should have crept in some errors, (for to err is human) the inspired reviewer would, of course, point them out and have them corrected; now such a book would be, for all important purposes, an inspired volume; and would deserve a place in the Canon of Holy Scripture. If any credit, then, is due to the testimony of the Christian Fathers, the gospels of Mark and Luke, are Canonical books; for, as was before stated, there is a general concurrence among them, that these Evangelists submitted their works to the inspection, and received the approbation, of the apostles Peter and Paul.

4. Finally, the internal evidence is as strong in favour of the gospels under consideration, as of any other books of the New-Testament. There is no reason to think that Mark or Luke were capable of writing with such perfect simplicity and propriety, without the aid of inspiration, or the assistance of inspired men. If we reject these books from

the Canon, we must give up the argument derived from internal evidence for the inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures, altogether. It is true, the learned professor, whose opinions we are opposing, has said, "The oftener I compare their writings (Mark's and Luke's) with those of St. Matthew and St. John, the greater are my doubts." And speaking in another place of Mark he says, "In some immaterial instances he seems to have erred," and gives it as his opinion, "That they who undertake to reconcile St. Mark with St. Matthew, or to show that he is nowhere corrected by St. John, experience great difficulty, and have not seldom to resort to unnatural explanations." But the learned professor has not mentioned any particular cases of irreconcileable discrepancies between this evangelist and St. Matthew; nor does he indicate in what statements he is corrected by St. John. Until something of this kind is exhibited, general remarks of this sort are deserving of no consideration. To harmonize the evangelists has always been found a difficult task, but this does not prove that they contradict each other, or that their accounts are irreconcilable. Many things, which, at first sight, appear contradictory, are found, upon closer examination, to be perfectly harmonious; and if there be some things, which commentators have been unable satisfactorily to reconcile, it is no more than what might be expected, in narratives so concise, and in which, a strict regard to chronolo-

gical order, did not enter into the plan of the writers. And if this objection be permitted to influence our judgment, in this case, it will operate against the inspiration of the other evangelists as well as Mark; but in our apprehension, when the discrepancies are impartially considered, and all the circumstances of the facts candidly and accurately weighed, there will be found no solid ground of objection to the inspiration of any of the gospels;—certainly nothing, which can counterbalance the strong evidence arising from the style and spirit of the writers. In what respects these two Evangelists fall short of the others, has never been shown; upon the most thorough examination and fair comparison of these inimitable productions, they appear to be all indited by the same spirit, and to possess the same superiority to all human compositions.

Compare these gospels with those which are acknowledged to have been written by uninspired men, and you will need no nice power of discrimination to see the difference: the first appear in every respect worthy of God; the last betray, in every page, the weakness of man.

I beg leave, here, to use the words of an excellent writer, in a late work: "The gospel of St. Luke was always from the very moment of its publication, received as inspired as well as authentic. It was published during the lives of St. John, St. Peter, and St. Paul, and was approved and sanctioned by them as inspired; and received as such

by the churches, in conformity to the Jewish Canon, which decided on the genuineness or spuriousness of the inspired books of their own church, by receiving him as a prophet, who was ackowledged as such by the testimony of an established prophet. On the same grounds Luke must be considered as a true Evangelist: his gospel being dictated and approved by an apostle, of whose authority there can be no question. There is likewise sufficient evidence to warrant the conclusions of Whitby—that both St. Mark and St. Luke were of the number of the seventy, who had a commission from Christ to preach the gospel not to the Jews only, but to the other nations—That the Holy Ghost fell on these among the numbers of the seventy, who formed a part of the hundred and twenty, assembled on the day of Pentecost, and from that time they were guided by the influences of the Holy Spirit, in writing or preaching the gospel. And if the Universal Church, from the first ages, received this gospel as divinely inspired, on these satisfactory grounds, distance of time cannot weaken the evidences of truth, and we are required to receive it on the same testimony. That which satisfied those who had much better means of judging, should certainly satisfy us, at this time."*

There is something reprehensible, not to say

* New Testament, by the Rev. George Townsend. Vol. 1. p. 5.

impious, in that bold spirit of modern criticism, which has led many eminent Biblical scholars, especially in Germany, first to attack the authority of particular books of Scripture, and next to call in question the inspiration of the whole volume. To what extent this licentiousness of criticism has been carried, I need not say; for it is a matter of notoriety, that of late, the most dangerous enemies of the Bible, have been found occupying the places of its advocates; and the critical art, which was intended for the correction of the text, and the interpretation of the Sacred books, has, in a most unnatural way, been turned against the Bible; and finally, the inspiration of all the sacred books, has not only been questioned, but scornfully rejected, *by Professors of Theology!* And these men, while living on endowments which pious benevolence had consecrated for the support of religion, and openly connected with churches whose creeds contain orthodox opinions, have so far forgotten their high responsibilities, and neglected the claims which the church had on them, as to exert all their ingenuity and learning, to sap the foundation of that system, which they were sworn to defend. They have had the shameless hardihood, to send forth into the world, books under their own names, which contain fully as much of the poison of infidelity, as ever distilled from the pens of the most malignant deists, whose writings have fallen, as a curse upon the world. The only effec-

tual security which we have against this new and most dangerous form of infidelity, is found in the spirit of the age, which is superficial and cursory in its reading, that however many elaborate critical works may be published in foreign languages, very few of them will be read, even by Theological students, in this country.

May God overrule the efforts of these enemies of Christ and the Bible, so that good may come out of evil!

SECTION VIII.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN—LIFE OF THIS EVANGELIST—OCCASION AND TIME OF HIS WRITING—CANONICAL AUTHORITY, INDISPUTABLE.

The Fourth gospel was written by John, the son of Zebedee and Salome, who was originally a fisherman of Galilee, and brother of James; and we may suppose, was the younger of the brothers, as he is generally mentioned last, and is commonly reported to have been the youngest of all Christ's disciples. They were plain, uneducated men, as their occupation sufficiently indicates. Probably they had been disciples of John the Baptist, and some have conjectured that John the Evangelist was one of the two, to whom John the Baptist pointed out Jesus, and who went after him to his lodging. The other we know was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother; and John, in other cases, has concealed his own name, where any thing is mentioned, which could be interpreted to his honour.

Why these two brothers were surnamed Boanerges, by the Lord, does not clearly appear, unless we suppose that the names were prophetic of the manner of their preaching, when commissioned as apostles. But there are no facts recorded, from

which any inference can be drawn, in relation to this subject. John has been long celebrated for his affectionate temper and for the suavity of his manners, which appear very remarkably in all his writings; but there is no evidence that he was naturally of a meek temper. The facts in the gospel history would seem to indicate, that both he and his brother were of a fiery temper, and very ambitious by nature; and some have supposed, that their surname had relation to this ardour of temper, but this is not very probable.

We know that John was the bosom friend of Jesus, the disciple whom he loved with a peculiar affection; and that he was admitted to all those scenes of a very interesting nature, from which most of the other disciples were excluded.

It is also certain, that he was present at the crucifixion; stood near the cross in company with Mary the mother of our Lord; and that he remained at the place until the body of Jesus, now dead, was pierced with a spear. On the morning of the resurrection, John visited the sepulchre, in company with Peter, and was present when Christ made his first appearance to the Eleven; and when he manifested himself to his disciples, at the sea of Tiberias.

After Pentecost, he was with Peter in the temple, when the lame man was healed; accompanied Peter also to Samaria, and was present at the council of Jerusalem.

From the book of Revelation we learn, that this evangelist was for a time an exile in the island of Patmos, for the testimony of Jesus, where he was favoured with wonderful visions and communications from the Lord.

It seems to have been intimated to him by his Lord, at the sea of Tiberias, that he should survive the destruction of Jerusalem; for, when Peter asked, *Lord what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?* which saying gave rise to an opinion among the disciples, that that disciple should not die; *Yet Jesus said not unto him, he shall not die, but if I will, that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?* And this accords very well with the testimonies of the ancients, who inform us, that John lived to a great age.

IRENÆUS, in two places of his work against Heretics, says, "That John lived to the time of Trajan," which will bring us down to A. D. 98.

EUSEBIUS understands CLEMENT of Alexandria to say the same thing.

ORIGEN also testifies, "That John having lived long in Asia, was buried at Ephesus."

POLYCRATES, who wrote in the second century, and was bishop of Ephesus, asserts, "That John was buried in that city."

JEROME, in his book of Illustrious Men, and in his work against Jovinian, says, "That the apostle John lived in Asia to the time of Trajan; and

dying at a great age, in the sixty-eighth year of our Lord's passion, was buried near the city of Ephesus." This account would bring down the death of John to A. D. 100, in which year, it is placed by this writer, in his Chronicon.

The testimonies for the genuineness of the gospel of John, are as full and satisfactory as could be desired.

Irenæus tells us," That the evangelist John designed, by his Gospel to confute the errors, which Cerinthus had infused into the minds of the people, and had been infused by those who were called Nicolaitons; and to convince them, that there was one God, who made all things by his Word; and not as they imagined, one who was the Creator, and another, who was the Father of our Lord; one, who was the Son of the Creator, and another who was the Christ, who continued impassible, and descended upon Jesus, the Son of the Creator."

Jerome fully confirms this testimony of Irenæus, and says," That when St. John was in Asia, where there arose the heresies of Ebion and Cerinthus, and others, who denied that Christ was come in the flesh; that is, denied his divine nature, whom he, in his Epistle calls Antichrists, and St. Paul frequently condemns, in his Epistles, he was forced by almost all the bishops of Asia, and the deputations of many other churches, to write more plainly concerning the divinity of our Saviour, and to soar aloft

in a discourse on the word, not more bold than happy."

"It is related in ecclesiastical history, that John, when solicited by the brethren to write, answered, that he would not do it unless a public day of fasting and prayer was appointed to implore God's assistance; which being done, and the solemnity being honoured with a satisfactory revelation from God, he broke forth into these words, IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD," &c.

JEROME in his book of Illustrious Men, says, "John wrote a gospel at the desire of the bishops of Asia, against Cerinthus, and other heritics, especially the doctrine of the Ebionites, then springing up, who say, that Christ did not exist before the birth of Mary; for which reason he was obliged to declare his divine nativity. Another reason of his writing is also mentioned, which is, that after having read the volumes of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, he expressed his approbation of their history as true: but observed, that they had recorded an account of but one year of our Lord's ministry, even the last after the imprisonment of John, (the Baptist) in which also he suffered. Omitting therefore that year, (in a great measure) the history of which had been written by the other three, he related the Acts of the preceding time, before John was shut up in prison, as may appear to those who read the four Evangelists, which may serve to se-

count, for the seeming difference between John and the rest."

Augustine, in conformity with the account of Jerome, says, "That this Evangelist wrote concerning the co-eternal divinity of Christ against heretics."

Lampe has called in question these early testimonies respecting the occasion of writing this Gospel, and has attempted to prove by argument, that John had no view to any particular heretics, in the commencement of his Gospel.

Lardner has taken the same side, and adduces several arguments in favour of Lampe's opinion. Titman adopts the same opinion. But the probable reasonings of ingenious men, when opposed to such a weight of ancient testimony, in relation to a matter of fact, which occurred at no long distance before their time, deserve very little consideration. And, indeed, after reading Lardner's arguments, I must say, that they appear to me to have no high degree of plausibility.

That Cerinthus lived in the time of the apostle John, and was known to him, is evident from another testimony of Irenæus, which has been often quoted. It is a story, which he says, some persons in his time had from Polycarp, the disciple of John; which is as follows, "John going to a certain bath at Ephesus, and perceiving that Cerinthus, that noted arch-heretic, was in the bath, im-

mediately leaped out, and said, Let us go home, lest the bath should fall down upon us, having in it such a heretic, as Cerinthus, that enemy of truth."

AUGUSTINE, moreover, asserts, "That John is the last of the Evangelists."

CHRYSOSTOM supposes, that John did not write his gospel till after the destruction of Jerusalem.

PAULINUS says, "It had been handed down by tradition, that John survived all the other apostles, and wrote the last of the four Evangelists, and so as to confirm their most certain history." Again, he observes, "That in the beginning of John's gospel all heretics are confuted."

COSMAS, of Alexandria, informs us, "That when John dwelt at Ephesus, there were delivered to him by the faithful, the writings of the other three Evangelists. Receiving them he said, that what they had written was well written; but some things were omitted by them, which were needful to be related. And being desired by the faithful, he also published his writing, as a kind of supplement to the rest."

ISIDORE of Seville, says, "That John wrote the last in Asia."

THEOPHYLACT computed, that John wrote about two and thirty years after Christ's Ascension.

EUTHYMIUS, says, "That this gospel was no

written until long after the destruction of Jerusalem."

NICEPHORUS, "That John wrote last of all, about six and thirty years, after our Lord's ascension to Heaven."

Having exhibited the testimonies of the ancients, it may not be amiss, to set down the opinions of some of the moderns, relative to the time when this gospel was written.

MILL, FABRICIUS, LE CLERC, JONES, and many others, agree that John wrote his gospel, about the year of our Lord, 97.

WETSTEIN thinks it might have been written about thirty two years after the ascension.

BASNAGE and LAMPE, are inclined to believe, that it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem.

WHISTON and LARDNER adopt the same opinion.

The gospel of St. John is cited by CLEMENT of Rome; by BARNABAS; by IGNATIUS; by THEOPHILUS of Antioch; by IRENÆUS; and by CLEMENT of Alexandria, in more than forty instances. And by all those writers, who lived with, or immediately after the apostles, this gospel is appealed to, as inspired Scripture: and the same is the fact, in regard to ORIGEN, JEROME, AUGUSTINE, and all the Fathers who came after this period. Nearly the whole of this gospel could be made up from the citations of the writers of the first four centuries.

It was never excluded from any church, or any catalogue of the books of the New Testament, and therefore possesses every evidence of being Canonical, which any reasonable man could demand.

SECTION IX.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES—LUKE THE AUTHOR—CANONICAL AUTHORITY UNDISPUTED BY THE FATHERS—REJECTED ONLY BY HERETICS.

That the Acts of the Apostles is the writing of Luke the Evangelist, is manifest from the dedication to Theophilus, in which reference is made to his gospel, which was first written. And it is also evident, from the uniform testimony of all antiquity; the fact never having been once questioned, by any member of the catholic church.

But it is pleasant to read the explicit testimonies of the Fathers, to the sacred books of the New Testament: I will, therefore, bring forward, the most important.

IRENÆUS, repeatedly cites passages from this book, saying, "Luke the disciple and follower of Paul, says thus." "Luke the inseperable companion and fellow labourer of Paul, wrote thus." He takes particular notice of Luke's using the first person plural, *we endeavoured—we came—we went—we sat down—we spoke*, &c. And enters into some discussion to prove "Luke's fitness for writing a just and true history."

In another place, he shows, "That St. Luke's Acts of the Apostles, ought to be equally received

with his gospel; for that in them he has carefully delivered to us the truth, and given to us a sure rule for salvation." Again, he says, "Paul's account of his going to Jerusalem, exactly agrees with Luke's, in the Acts."

CLEMENS Alexandrinus, citing Paul's speech at Athens, introduces it thus, "So Luke, in the Acts of the Apostles, relates."

TERTULLIAN cites several passages out of the Acts of the Apostles, which he calls, *Commentarius Lucæ*, The Commentary of Luke.

ORIGEN, ascribes the Acts of the Apostles to Luke.

EUSEBIUS says, "Luke has left us two inspired volumes, The Gospel, and the Acts."

JEROME expressly asserts, "That the Acts, was the composition of Luke."

The Syriac Verion of the New Testament, ascribes the Acts to Luke; and in some very ancient Manuscripts of the New Testament, his name is prefixed to this book.

To this uniform body of ancient testimony, there is nothing which can be objected, except that the author of the Synopsis, commonly ascribed to ATHANASIUS, says, "Peter dictated the Acts of the Apostles, but Luke wrote them." But if this were true, it would not in the least detract from the authority of the book, but rather increase it. One testimony, however, can be of no avail, against

so many; and we know, that Luke knew most of the facts recorded in this book, by his own personal observation, and needed no one to dictate them to him. Besides, Peter was not an eye-witness of the greater number of the facts, related in this book.

The time when the Acts of the Apostles was written, may be determined pretty accurately, by the time when the history which it contains terminates; that is about A. D. 62; for no doubt, he began to write soon after he left Rome.

That the Acts of the Apostles is of Canonical authority is proved, from its having a place in all the ancient catalogues of the books of the New Testament.

The same is evinced, by the numerous citations from this book, by the early Fathers; who explicitly appeal to it, as of divine authority—as an inspired book.

It is plainly referred to in more instances than one, by CLEMENT of Rome, the fellow labourer of Paul.

POLYCARP the disciple of John, also cites a passage from the Acts, in his Epistle to the Philippians.

It is cited by JUSTIN MARTYR, in his Exhortation to the Greeks.

It is distinctly cited by IRENÆUS, more than thirty times, in some of which instances it is expressly called, SCRIPTURE; and the credit and au-

thority of the book are largely discussed, in his work against Heretics.

The citations of TERTULLIAN, from this book, are too numerous to be particularized. He also quotes it expressly, under the name of SCRIPTURE; "Which part of *Scripture*," says he, "they who do not receive, must deny the descent of the Holy Ghost, and be ignorant of the infant state of the Christian Church."*

This book was also constantly read as *Scripture*, in the weekly assemblies of Christians, all over the world.

From the testimonies adduced above, it will appear with convincing evidence, how unfounded is the opinion of some learned men, that the Acts, in the early period of the church, was very little known, comparatively, and very little esteemed. This opinion has been favoured by such men as Father Simon, and Dr. Mill; and has no other foundation than a passage in the *Prolegomena* to the Acts, ascribed to CHRYSOSTOM, the genuineness of which is very doubtful. But if CHRYSOSTOM was the author of this passage, how little can it weigh against such a host of witnesses. The passage referred to, is, "This book is not so much as known to many; they know neither the book nor by whom it was written." Now, the same might be asserted, respecting all the books in the Canon. There are ma-

* De Prescriptione.

ny persons ignorant of what they contain, and unacquainted with their object. But there is no need to dwell longer on this objection.

The Acts of the Apostles, therefore, has an indisputable claim to a place in the sacred Canon. No better, or stronger evidence, can be desired. It is true, that some of the earliest heretics did not receive this book as Canonical. Tertullian informs us, that it was rejected by Cerdo, the master of Marcion, and some others whom he does not name, but whom he refutes.

Philastrius informs us, that the Cerinthians did not receive this book.

And Augustine tells us, that the Manichees did not, because they considered Manes to be the Paraelete, promised by the Saviour; but in the Acts, it is declared to have been the Holy Ghost, which descended on the apostles, on the day of Pentecost.

"But," says Father Simon, "let us leave these enthusiasts, who had no other reason for rejecting the books, received by the whole church, except that they did not suit with the idea which they had formed of the Christian Religion."

SECTION X.

TESTIMONIES TO THE CANONICAL AUTHORITY OF THE FOURTEEN EPISTLES OF PAUL.

On the subject of Paul's Epistles, there is a universal consent among the ancients, except as it relates to the Epistle to the Hebrews; which having been published without the apostle's name and usual salutation, many conjectured, that it was the production of another person: and while some ascribed it to Barnabas, others thought that either Clement, or Luke, was the writer. There seems to have been a difference between the Eastern and Western churches on this subject; for the Greeks appear to have entertained no doubts, in regard to Paul's being the author of this Epistle: it was only among the Latins, that its genuineness was a matter of uncertainty. And the most learned among these, adopted the opinion, that it was the production of Paul; and, by degrees, its authority was fully established in the West, as well as the East. The true state of the case will, however, appear more clearly, by citing the testimonies of the Fathers, than by any general representation.

Although, CLEMENT, the fellow-labourer of Paul, frequently cites passages from the gospels

and Epistles, yet he never expressly mentions any book of the New Testament, except Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians; to whom also Clement's Epistle was addressed. His words are, "Take into your hands the Epistle of blessed Paul, the apostle. What did he at first write to you, in the beginning of the gospel? Verily he did, by the Spirit, admonish you, concerning himself, and Cephas, and Apollos; because that even then you did form parties." There are in this Epistle of Clement, many other passages, in which the words of Paul are cited, but this is the only one in which his name is mentioned.

HERMAS, and IGNATIUS also, often quote the words of Paul's Epistles, but the book from which they are taken, is not designated.

POLYCARP, the disciple of the apostle John, and bishop of Smyrna, who suffered martyrdom, in extreme old age, about the middle of the second century, after sentence of death was pronounced upon him, wrote an Epistle to the Philippians, in which he makes express mention of Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, "Do ye not know, that *the saints shall judge the world*, as Paul teaches."

He also quotes a passage from the Epistle to the Ephesians, under the name of Holy Scripture. "For I trust," says he, "that ye are well exer-

See 1 Cor. vi. 2.

cised in the Holy Scriptures—As in these Scriptures it is said, *Be ye angry and sin not*; *let not the sun go down upon your wrath.* Polycarp, also cites passages from the second Epistle to the Corinthians; from the Epistle to the Galatians; from the First and Second to the Thessalonians; from the Epistle to the Hebrews; and from both the Epistles to Timothy; but as is usual, with the apostolical Fathers, he does not refer to the books or authors from which he makes his citations.

Justin Martyr, quotes many passages in the very words of Paul, without mentioning his name. But Irenæus distinctly, and frequently, quotes thirteen of Paul's Epistles. He takes nothing, indeed, from the short Epistle to Philemon, which can easily be accounted for, by the brevity of this letter, and the special object which the apostle had in view, in penning it.

It would fill a large space, to put down all the passages cited by Irenæus, from the Epistles of Paul. Let it suffice to give one from each: "This same thing, Paul has explained, writing to the Romans, *Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ, separated to the gospel of God.* And again, writing to the Romans of Israel, he says, *Whose are the Fathers, and of whom, concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is God over all blessed forever-*

Ephes. iv. 26.

more. "This also Paul manifestly shows, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, saying, *Moreover brethren I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud.* Paul, in the Second to the Corinthians, says, *In whom the God of this world hath blinded the eyes of them that believe not.*" "The apostle Paul says, in his Epistle to the Galatians, *Wherefore then serveth the law of works? It was added until the seed should come, to whom the promise was made.*" "As also the blessed Paul says, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, *For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.*" "As also Paul says to the Philippians, *I am full having received of Epaphroditus, the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice, acceptable, well pleasing to God.*" "Again, Paul says, in his Epistle to the Colossians, *Luke the beloved physician saluteth you.*" "The apostle in the First Epistle to the Thessalonians says, *And the God of peace sanctify you wholly.*" "And again, in the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, speaking of Antichrist, he says, *And then shall that wicked one be revealed.*" In the beginning of his work against here-

Rom. i. 1. ix. 5.
2 Cor. iv. 4.
Ephes. v.30.
Col. iv. 14.
Thes. xi. 8
Cor. x. 1.
Gal. iii. 19.
Phil. iv. 13.
1 Thes. v. 23.

sies, he says, "Whereas some having rejected the truth, bring in lying words, and *vain genealogies, rather than godly edifying, which is in faith,* as saith the Apostle." This Epistle is often quoted by Irenæus, in the work above mentioned. Speaking of Linus, bishop of Rome, he says, "Of this Linus, Paul makes mention in his Epistle to Timothy, *Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus.*" "As Paul says, *A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition, reject.*" Thus, we have seen, that *Irenæus,* who lived in the age immediately succeeding that in which Paul lived and wrote, has borne explicit testimony to all the Epistles of that apostle, which have his name prefixed, except the short Epistle to Philemon, from which, it is probable, he had no occasion to take any authorities, as it is very concise, and addressed to a friend on a particular subject, in which Paul felt deeply interested.

As to the Epistle to the Hebrews, which is anonymous, there is ample evidence, that IRENÆUS was acquainted with it; but it is doubtful, whether he esteemed it to be the production of Paul, or some other person. As he resided in France, it is very possible, that he participated in the prejudice of the Western church, on this point. EUSEBIUS informs us, that he had seen a work of IRENÆUS, which has not reached our times, in which he

1 Tim. i. 4. 2 Tim. iv. 21. Tit. iii. 10.

cites passages from the Epistle to the Hebrews; but he does not say, that he quoted them as Paul's. And in his works, which are still extant, there are several passages cited from this Epistle, but without direct reference to the source whence they were derived.

ATHENAGORAS quotes from several of Paul's Epistles; but as has been seen to be the custom of the early Fathers, he commonly uses the words, without informing the reader, from what author they were borrowed. There is, however, one passage, in which he refers to both the First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians, as being the production of the apostle Paul. "It is manifest therefore," says he, "that according to the apostle, *This corruptible and dissipated must put on incorruption, that the dead being raised up, and the separated and even consumed parts being again united, every one may receive justly, the things he hath done in the body, whether they be good or bad.*"*

CLEMENT of Alexandria, abounds in quotations from Paul's Epistles; a few of which will be sufficient for our purpose. "The apostle, in the Epistle to the Romans, says, *Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God.*" "The blessed Paul, in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, says, *Brethren be not children in understanding, how-*

* 1 Cor. xv. 54. 2 Cor. v. 10.

beit, in malice be ye children, but in understanding be ye men." He has also many quotations from the Second to the Corinthians, "The apostle," says he, "calls the common doctrine of the Faith, *a savour of knowledge,* in the Second to the Corinthians." "Hence also," says Paul, "ye *have these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse our hearts from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness, in the fear of God.* Whereupon, Paul also writing to the Galatians, says, *My little children of whom I travail in birth, again until Christ be formed in you.*"

"Whereupon the blessed apostle says, *I testify in the Lord that ye walk not as other Gentiles walk.*" Again; "*Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.*" He quotes part of the First and Second chapters of the Epistle to the Philippians, expressly; and in another place, he quotes the same epistle, after this manner: "The Apostle of the Lord also exhorting the Macedonians, says, *The Lord is at hand, take heed that we be not found empty.*"

CLEMENT, also, quotes the Epistle to the Colossians, and the Epistles to the Thessalonians. From the First Epistle to Timothy, he cites this passage, *O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain bablings, and oppositions of science, falsely so called, which*

1 Cor. xiv. 20. Gal. iv. 9. Eph. iv. 5. 1 Cor. ii. 14. Ephes. iv. 17, 18. 2 Cor. vii. 1. Eph. v. 21.

some preferring, have erred concerning the faith. On which he observes, "Heretics confuted by this saying, reject both Epistles to Timothy." The Epistle to Titus, is also quoted several times; and he remarks, in one place, "that Paul had cited Epimenides, the Cretan, in his Epistle to Titus, after this manner, *One of themselves, a poet of their own, said, the Cretans are always liars.*" The Epistle to the Hebrews is also distinctly quoted and is ascribed to Paul, as its author. Wherefore, writing to the Hebrews, who were declining from the faith to the Law, Paul says, *Have ye need that any teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such, as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.*

TERTULLIAN frequently, and expressly, quotes most of Paul's Epistles. In one place, he says, "I will therefore by no means say, God, nor Lord, but I will follow the apostles; so that if the Father and the Son are mentioned together, I will say, God the Father, and Jesus Christ the Lord. But when I mention Christ only, I will call him God as the apostle does, *Of whom Christ came, who is over all God blessed for evermore.*"

Paul in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, speaks of those, who doubted, or denied the resurrection.

In his Treatise on Monogamy, he computes, that it

1 Tim. vi. 20 21. Tit. i. 12, 13.
Heb. v. 12. Rom. ix. 5.

was about one hundred and sixty years from Paul's writing this Epistle, to the time when he wrote. "In the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, they suppose the apostle Paul to have forgiven the same fornicator, who in the First, he declared, ought to be delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh."

"But of this, no more need be said, if it be the same Paul, who, writing to the Galatians, reckons heresy among the works of the flesh; and who directs Titus to reject a man that is a heretic, after the first admonition, *knowing that he that is such is subverted and sinneth, being condemned of himself.*"

"I pass," says he, "to another Epistle, which we have inscribed to the Ephesians; but the heretics, to the Laodiceans." Again, "According to the true testimony of the church, we suppose this Epistle to have been sent to the Ephesians, and not to the Laodiceans; but Marcion has endeavoured to alter this inscription, upon pretence of having made a more diligent search into this matter. But the inscriptions are of no importance, for the apostle wrote to all, when he wrote to some."

Speaking of the Christian's hope, he says, "Of which hope and expectation, Paul to the Galatians says, *For we through the spirit wait for the hope of righteouness by faith.* He does not say, we have obtained it, but he speaks of the hope of the righteousness of God, in the day of judgment, when

our reward shall be decided. Of which being in suspense, when he wrote to the Philippians, he said, *If by any means, I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead; not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect.*[f] The apostle, writing to the Colossians, expressly cautions against philosophy, *Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, and not after the instruction of the Spirit.*" "And in the Epistle to the Thessalonians, the apostle adds, *But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.*" "And in the second epistle to the same persons, he writes with greater solicitude. But I beseech you, brethren, by *the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, nor be troubled.*" "And this word, Paul has used in writing to Timothy, *O Timothy keep that which is committed to thy trust.*"

That remarkable passage of TERTULLIAN, in which he is supposed to refer to the existing autographs of the Epistles of Paul, although referred to already, may with propriety be here introduced. "Well," says he, "if you be willing to exercise your curiosity profitably in the business of your salvation, visit the apostolical churches, in which the very chairs of the apostles still preside, in which their

[f] Phil. iii. 11, 12. 1 Thes. v. 1, 2, 3. 2 Thes. ii. 2. Col. ii. 6. 1 Tim. vi. 30.

very authentic letters (Authenticæ Literæ) are recited, sending forth the voice, and representing the countenance of each one of them. Is Achaia near you? You have Corinth. If you are not far from Macedonia; you have Philippi;—you have Thessalonica. If you can go to Asia; you have Ephesus. But if you are near to Italy, you have Rome, from whence also we may be easily satisfied."

There are three opinions respecting the meaning of this phrase *Authenticæ Literæ; authentic letters*; the first is, that it signifies the original manuscripts of the apostles;—the authographs which were sent severally to the churches named, to all of which Paul addressed Epistles; the second opinion is, that Tertullian meant to refer his readers to the original Greek of these epistles, which they had been accustomed to read in a Latin version; and the third is, that this phrase means, *well authenticated letters*; Epistles, which by application to these churches, could be proved to be, genuine writings of the apostles.

Now, that the first of these is the true sense of Tertullian's words, will, I think, appear very probable, if we consider, that if those autographs were preserved, even with common care, they would have been extant in the time of Tertullian, who reckons only 160 years from the time of Paul's writing to his own time.

And again, unless he meant this, there is no reason why he should direct his readers only to those ci-

ties which had received Epistles; for doubtless many other churches, which might be more accessible, had authentic copies, in the Greek language. Such copies undoubtedly existed in Africa, where Tertullian lived. They need not therefore have been directed to go to Rome, or Corinth, or Ephesus, or Philippi, or Thessalonica, to see the Epistles of Paul, in Greek.

Neither was it necessary to take a journey to these cities to be fully convinced, that the letters which had been received by them, were genuine; for the evidence of this fact was not confined to these distinguished places, but was diffused all over the Christian world.

From these considerations, I conclude, that in Tertullian's time, these churches had in possession, and preserved with care, the identical Epistles sent to them, by Paul. This sense is confirmed, by what he says, of their being able to hear the voice, and behold the countenance of the apostles, and sees the very seats on which they had been accustomed to sit when they presided in the church. These seats were still occupied by the bishops, and seemed *to preside*, as they were venerable from having been once occupied by the apostles.

Tertullian was acquainted with the Epistle to the Hebrews, for he quotes several passages from the sixth chapter, but he ascribes it to Barnabas, and not to Paul. In this opinion, I believe he is singular.

Origen, quotes Paul's Epistles, as expressly and frequently, as is done, by almost any modern writer

To transcribe all the passages cited by him, would be to put down a large portion of the writings of this apostle. A few instances, will be sufficient.

In one passage, in his work against Celsus, he mentions several of Paul's Epistles together, in the following manner, "Do you, first of all explain the Epistles of him who says these things, and having diligently read, and attended to the sense of the words there used, particularly, in that to the Ephesians; to the Thessalonians; to the Philippians; to the Romans, &c." The epistle to the Ephesians, is elsewhere quoted by Origen, with the inscription which it now bears.

After employing an argument founded on a passage, quoted from the Epistle to the Hebrews, he observes; "But possibly some one pressed with this argument, will take refuge in the opinion of those who reject this Epistle, as not written by Paul." In answer to such, we intend to write a distinct discourse, to prove this to be an Epistle of Paul." In his citations of this Epistle, therefore, he constantly ascribes it to Paul, in such expressions as these, "Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews," "In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the same Paul says."

But Origen not only expresses his own opinion on this subject, but asserts that by the tradition received by the ancients, it was ascribed to Paul. His words are, "For it is not without reason, that the ancients have handed it down to us as Paul's." Now, when we take into view that Origen lived

within one hundred years of the time of the apostles, and that he was a person of most extraordinary learning, and that he had travelled much through different countries, his testimony on this point is of great weight; especially, since his opinion is founded on the testimony of the ancients, by whom he must mean the contemporaries of the apostles. At the same time, however, he mentions, that some ascribed it to Luke, and others to Clement of Rome.

CYPRIAN, often quotes the Epistles of Paul. "According," says he, "to what the blessed apostle wrote in his Epistle to the Romans, *Every one shall give account of himself to God, therefore, let us not judge one another.*" In his First book of Testimonies, he says, In the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, it is said, *Moreover, brethren, I would not ye should be ignorant, how that all our Fathers were baptized unto Moses, in the cloud, and in the sea.*" "Likewise, in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, it is written, "*Their minds were blinded until this day.*" "In like manner, blessed Paul, by the inspiration of the Lord, says, *Now he that ministereth seed to the sower, minister bread for your food and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness, that ye may be enriched in all things.*"

Rom. xiv. 12. 1 Cor. x. 1.
2 Cor. iii. 15. 2 Cor. ix. 10.

"Likewise Paul to the Galatians, says, *When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman.*"

CYPRIAN, expressly quotes the Epistle to the Ephesians, under that title. "But the apostle Paul, speaking of the same thing more clearly and plainly, writes to the Ephesians, and says, *Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water.* So also, Paul to the Philippians, says, *Who being appointed in the form of God, did not earnestly affect to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, taking on him the form of a servant; and being made in the likeness of man, and found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*" "In the Epistle of Paul to the Colossians, it is written, *Continue in prayer, watching in the same.*" "Likewise, the blessed apostle Paul, full of the Holy Ghost, sent to call and convert the Gentiles, warns and teaches, *Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy*, &c." He also quotes both the Epistles to the Thessalonians. In his book of Testimonies, he says, "If the apostle Paul writing to Timothy, said, *Let no man despise thy youth*, much more may it be said of you and your colleagues, let no man despise thy age." "Therefore

Gal. iv. 5. Ephes. v. 25, 26. Phil. ii. 6—8.
Col. ii. 8. vi. 2. 1 Tim. iv. 12.

the apostle writes to Timothy, and exhorts, *that a bishop should not strive, but be gentle, and apt to teach.*" These two Epistles are elsewhere quoted distinctly, as the First and Second to Timothy. He also quotes from the Epistle to Titus, the passage, "*A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition, reject.*"

CYPRIAN, no where, quotes the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is probable therefore, that he, like some others of the Latin Fathers, did not believe it to be Paul's; or was doubtful respecting it.

Neither does he cite the Epistle to Philemon; of this no other reason need be sought, but its contents, and brevity. How many Christian authors have written volumes, without any citation of that Epistle.

VICTORINUS, who lived near the close of the third century, often quotes Paul's Epistles; and among the rest, he cites the Epistle to the Hebrews, which he seems to have believed to be the production of Paul.

DYONISIUS of Alexandria, also a contemporary of Origen, and a man of great learning, in the few fragments of his works which remain, often refers to Paul's Epistles.

NOVATUS, presbyter of the church of Rome, who flourished about the middle of the third century, expressly cites from the Epistle to the Romans, that famous testimony to Christ's divinity, so often quoted by the Fathers, *Whose are the Fathers,*

Tit. iii. 10. 2 Tim. ii. 24.

c

of whom is Christ according to the flesh, who is over all God blessed forever. And it deserves to be recollected, that although so many, beginning with Irenæus, have cited this passage, yet none of them appear to have thought the words capable of any other meaning, than the plain, obvious sense, which strikes the reader at first. That it was a mere exclamation of praise, seems never to have entered their minds. Novatus, also, quotes the First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians, the Epistles to the Galatians, to the Ephesians, and to the Philippians. From this last Epistle he cites those remarkable words, *Who being in the form of God,* and interprets the following clause in exact accordance with another of the Fathers, *did not eqrnestly seek to be like God, or to be equal with God.* He quotes from the Epistle to the Colossians, these words, *Whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers, things visible and invisible, by him all things consist.* The Epistles to Timothy, and to Titus, are also cited by this author.

Methodius, who lived in the later part of the third century, quotes Paul's Epistle to the Romans, First and Second to the Corinthians, To the Galatians, To the Ephesians, To the Philippians, To the Colossians. The First to the Thessalonians, and the First to Timothy. He has also taken se-

Phil. ii. 6. Col. i. 16, 17.

veral passages from the Epistle to the Hebrews; and quotes it in such a manner, as to render it highly probable, that he esteemed it to be a part of Sacred Scripture, and ascribed it to Paul.

Eusebius, the learned historian, undoubtedly received thirteen Epistles of Paul as genuine; and he seems to have entertained no doubt, respecting the Canonical authority of the Epistle to the Hebrews; but he sometimes expresses himself doubtfully, of its author; while at other times he quotes it as Paul's, without any apparent hesitation. In speaking of the universally acknowledged Epistle of Clement of Rome, he observes, "In which, inserting many sentiments of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and also using some of the very words of it, he plainly manifests that Epistle to be no modern writing. And hence, it has, not without reason, been reckoned among the other writings of the apostle; for Paul having written to the Hebrews in their own language, some think that the Evangelist Luke, others, that this very Clement, translated it; which last is the more probable of the two, there being a resemblance between the style of the Epistle of Clement, and that to the Hebrews; nor are the sentiments of these two writings very different." In his Ecclesiastical History, he speaks "Of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and divers other Epistles of Paul." And Theodoret positively asserts, that Eusebius received this Epistle as Paul's, and that he manifested that all

the ancients, almost, were of the same opinion. It seems, from these facts, that in the time of Eusebius, the churches with which he was acquainted, did generally receive the Epistle to the Hebrews, as the writing of Paul.

Ambrose, bishop of Milan, received fourteen Epistles of Paul.

Jerome received as undoubted, all Paul's Epistles, except that to the Hebrews, concerning which he says, in his Letter to Evangelius, "That all the Greeks and some of the Latins, received this Epistle."

And in his letter to Dardanus, "That it was not only received as Paul's, by all the churches of the East, in his time, but by all the Ecclesiastical writers, in former times; though many ascribe it to Barnabas, or Clement. He also says, that it was daily read in the churches; and if the Latins did not receive this Epistle, as the Greeks rejected the Revelation of John, he received both; not being so much influenced by present times, as the judgment of ancient writers, who quote both; and that not as they quote apocryphal books, and even Heathen writings, but as Canonical and Ecclesiastical."

Jerome, in speaking of the writings of Paul, gives the following very full and satisfactory testimony; "He wrote," says he, "nine Epistles to seven churches. To the Romans, one; to the Corinthians, two; to the Galatians, one; to the Philippians,

one; to the Colossians, one; to the Thessalonians, two; to the Ephesians, one; to Timothy, two; to Titus, one; to Philemon, one. But the Epistle, called, TO THE HEBREWS, is not thought to be his, because of the difference of argument and style; but rather Barnabas's, as Tertullian thought; or Luke's, according to some others; or Clement's, who was afterwards bishop of Rome; who being much with Paul, clothed and adorned Paul's sense, in his own language. Or if it be Paul's, he might decline putting his name to it, in the inscription, for fear of offending the Jews. Moreover, he wrote as a Hebrew to the Hebrews; it being his own language, whence it came to pass, that being translated, it has more elegance, in the Greek, than his other Epistles. This they say is the reason of its differing from Paul's other writings. There is also an Epistle to the Laodiceans; but it is rejected by every body." Jerome, commonly quotes the Epistle to the Hebrews, as the Apostle Paul's; and as we have seen before, this was his prevailing opinion, which is not contradicted in the long passage, just cited.

AUGUSTINE received fourteen Epistles of Paul, the last of which, in his catalogue, is, the Epistle to the Hebrews; he was aware however, that some in his time thought it of doubtful authority, "However, says he, "I am inclined to follow the opinion of the churches of the East, who receive it, among the Canonical Scriptures.

The time when each of these Epistles was written, cannot be ascertained with any exactness. It is not even agreed among the learned, which was the First of Paul's Epistles. Generally, indeed, it has been thought, that the two Epistles to the Thessalonians, were composed earlier than the others; but, of late, some learned men have given precedence to the Epistle to the Galatians. And this opinion is not altogether confined to the moderns, for Tertullian mentions this Epistle as among the first of Paul's writings. But the more common opinion is, that it was written during the long abode of this apostle, at Corinth. Among the advocates of this opinion we find L'Enfant, Beausobre, Lardner, &c.; Grotius, Capel, Witsius, and Wall, suppose, that it was written at Ephesus. These last, together with Fabricius and Mill, place the date of this Epistle to the Galatians, after that to the Romans.

Macknight maintains, that it was written from Antioch, after the Council of Jerusalem; and offers in support of his opinion several plausible arguments, which, if they do not prove all that he wishes, seem to render it probable that the time of this Epistle being written, was soon after the Council of Jerusalem.

Semler, however, is of opinion that this Epistle was written prior to the Council of Jerusalem.

From these various opinions, it is sufficiently evident, that the precise date of the Epistle to the Galatians, cannot be ascertained. If we take the opinions of those who give the earliest date, the time of writing will not be later than A. D. 47. But if we receive as more probable the opinions of those who think that it was written after the Council of Jerusalem, we shall bring it down to the year 50; while according to the opinion more commonly adopted, its date will be A. D. 52, or A. D. 53. And if we prefer the opinions of those who assign the latest date to this Epistle, we shall bring it down several years later, and instead of giving it the first place, will give it the ninth or tenth.

There seem to be better *data* for determining, that the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, was written from Corinth, about the year 51; and the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, was probably written a few months afterwards, from the same place.

Michaelis and Dr. Hales unite, in giving the next place, in the order of time, to the Epistle to Titus. Lardner, however, places it considerably later; and Paley assigns to it a date, later than any other author. On this subject, there is little else than conjecture to guide us.

The year in which this Epistle was written, according to Michaelis and Hales, was 53; according to Lardner, 56; according to Barrington,

57 ; and according to Whitby, Pearson, and Paley, 65.

The Epistle next in order, is the First to the Corinthians, the date of which can be determined with considerable precision, from the Epistle itself. *I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost.* These words teach where this Epistle was written, and by a comparison with other passages of Scripture, that it was penned near the close of Paul's long residence at Ephesus, from which place he departed, about A. D. 57. This then is the proper date of this Epistle.

The First Epistle to Timothy will stand next, if we follow the opinion most commonly entertained by learned men; and its date will be, A. D. 57, or A. D. 58. This opinion is supported by the authority of Athanasius, Theodoret, Baronius, Capellus, Blondel, Hammond, Grotius, Salmasius, Lightfoot, Benson, Barrington, Michaelis, Doddridge, and others. But Pearson, Rosenmüller, Macknight, Paley, Tomline, &c. place it as low as the year of our Lord 64, or 65.

The Second Epistle to the Corinthians was written, probably, about a year after the First, which will bring it to A. D. 58.

In the same year, it is thought, that Paul wrote his very important Epistle to the Romans. On this point however, there is some diversity of opi-

1 Cor. xvi. 8.

nion. But the Epistle itself contains internal evidence that it was written at Corinth, when the apostle was preparing to take the contributions of the churches to Jerusalem.

The date of the Epistles to the Ephesians, to the Philippians, and to the Colossians, can be ascertained pretty nearly, from the circumstance, that Paul was prisoner at Rome, when they were written. The Epistle to the Ephesians, may, with much probability, be referred to A. D. 61 ; the Epistle to the Philippians to A. D. 62 ; and the Epistle to the Colossians to the same year.

The short Epistle to Philemon was written, as appears by several coincidences, about the same time, as those just mentioned.

The Epistle to the Hebrews seems to have been written about the termination of Paul's first imprisonment at Rome. Its date, therefore, may without much danger of mistake, be referred to A. D. 62, or A. D. 63.

J. D. Michaelis, who, as has been seen, has done much to unsettle the Canon of Scripture by calling in question the genuineness of some of the books, as well as the inspiration of some of the writers, has, in an elaborate essay, (Vol. iv.) endeavoured to lessen the authority of this Epistle. For an answer to the arguments of this learned, but sceptical Professor, I would refer the reader to Town-

Paul's Second Epistle to Timothy seems to have been written during his second imprisonment at Rome, and shortly before his death, A. D. 66.

SECTION XI.

CANONICAL AUTHORITY OF THE SEVEN CATHOLIC EPISTLES.

The First Epistle of Peter, and the First of John, are quoted by IGNATIUS, POLYCARP, and PAPIAS, but not expressly, as the writings of these apostles. For the particular passages cited, the reader is referred to Lardner.

JUSTIN MARTYR has a saying which is now here found in Scripture, except in the Second of Peter. It is, *That a day of the Lord is a thousand years.*

DIOGNETUS quotes several passages from the First of Peter, and the First of John.

IRENÆUS quotes the First Epistle of Peter, expressly; "And Peter says, in his Epistle, *Whom having not seen, ye love.*" And from the Second, he takes the same passage, which has just been cited, as quoted by Justin Martyr. The First and Second of John are expressly quoted by this Father, for after citing his gospel, he goes on to say, "Wherefore also in his Epistle, he says, *Little children it is the last time.*" And again, "In the forementioned Epistle, the Lord commands us to shun those persons, who bring false doctrine,

saying, *Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver, and an Antichrist. Look to yourselves that ye lose not those things which ye have wrought.*" Now these words are undoubtedly taken from John's Second Epistle. Irenæus, seems indeed, to quote them from the First, but this was probably a slip of the memory.

Several passages out of the Epistle of James, are also cited by this Father, but without any distinct reference to the source whence they are derived.

ATHENAGORAS, also, has some quotations which appear to be from James, and Second Peter.

CLEMENT of Alexandria, often quotes First Peter; and sometimes Second Peter. The First Epistle of John is often cited by him. Jude also is quoted several times expressly, as, "Of these and the like heretics, I think Jude spoke prophetically, when he said, *I will that ye should know, that God having saved the people out of Egypt*, &c. He has a remark on Jude's modesty, that he did not style himself the brother of our Lord, although he was related to him, but begins his Epistle, *Jude the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James.*

TERTULLIAN, often quotes the First Epistle of John; but he has in none of his remaining writings cited any thing from James, Second Peter, or the Second of John. He has, however, one

express quotation from Jude, "Hence it is," say he, "that Enoch is quoted by the apostle Jude."

ORIGEN, in his commentary on St. John's Gospel, expressly quotes the Epistle of James, in the following passage, "For though it be called faith, if it be without works, it is dead, as we read in the Epistle ascribed to James." This is the only passage in the remaining Greek works of this Father, where this book is quoted; but in his Latin works, translated by Rufin, it is cited as the Epistle of James, the apostle, and brother of our Lord; and as "DIVINE SCRIPTURE." The First of Peter is often quoted expressly. In his book against Celsus, he says, "As it is said by Peter, *Ye as lively stones are built up a spiritual house.*" Again, "Peter in his Catholic Epistle, says, *Put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit.*"

According to Eusebius, Origen considered the Second of Peter as doubtful, and in his Greek works there are no clear citations from it; but there are found a few in his Latin works.

In the passage preserved by Eusebius, he says, that some were doubtful, respecting the Second and Third of John, "but for my part," says he, "let them be granted to be his."

ORIGEN has cited several passages from Jude, which are found in no other part of Scripture; and in one place remarks, "Jude wrote an Epistle of few lines indeed, but full of powerful words, and heavenly grace, who at the beginning, says, "*Jude the*

servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James." In another place, he shows, that some were doubtful of this Epistle, for he says, "But if any one receives also the Epistle of Jude, let him consider what will follow, from what is there said." This Epistle is cited in his Latin works also; and several times, in a Latin Epistle ascribed to Origen.

CYPRIAN no where quotes the Epistle of James; but the First of Peter is often cited. Several times he speaks of it, as the Epistle of Peter to the people of Pontus. He expressly ascribes it to "Peter the apostle," "the apostle of Christ," &c.

The Second of Peter, he never quotes. The First of John is often quoted by Cyprian. "The apostle John," says he, "mindful of this command, writes in this Epistle, *Hereby we perceive that we know him, for we keep his commandments. He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*" The Second and Third of John, he never mentions, nor the Epistle of Jude.

The opinion of EUSEBIUS of Cesarea, respecting the Epistle of James, was, that it was written by one of Christ's disciples, by the name of James, but he makes three of that name. Although he admits, that the writer of this Epistle was the brother of our Lord, who was made the first bishop of Jerusalem; yet he will not allow, that he was one of the Twelve. In his commentary on the Psalms, he says, "*Is any among you afflicted? let him*

pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms, as the sacred apostle says." In other parts of his works, he speaks very doubtfully of this Epistle, and in one passage, where he distributes the books into classes, he mentions this Epistle among the books which he calls spurious; by which, however, he only means, that it was not canonical. In his Ecclesiastical history, he speaks of the Epistles of Peter, in the following manner, "One Epistle of Peter, called his First, is universally received. This the presbyters of ancient times, have quoted in their writings, as undoubtedly genuine; but that called his Second Epistle, we have been informed, has not been received into the Testament. Nevertheless, it appearing to many to be useful, has been carefully studied with the other scriptures." And in another passage, he says, "*That* called the First of John and the First of Peter, are to be esteemed authentic. Of the controverted, yet well known or approved by the most, are, that called the Epistle of James, and that of Jude, and the Second of Peter, and the Second and Third of John, whether they were written by the Evangelist, or by another."

ATHANASIUS quotes the Epistle of James, as written by the apostle James. The First Epistle of Peter is frequently quoted by him; and he also cites passages from the second Epistle, and ascribes them to Peter. Both the first and second Epistles of John, are distinctly, and expressly quoted:

the third is not mentioned. He also, in two instances, cites the words of Jude.

JEROME's testimony concerning the Epistle of James, is full and explicit. His words are, "James, called the Lord's brother, surnamed Justus, as some think son of Joseph, by a former wife; but as I rather think, the son of Mary, the sister of our Lord's mother, mentioned by John in his gospel, (soon after our Lord's passion ordained by the apostles bishop of Jerusalem,) WROTE BUT ONE EPISTLE, which is among the Seven Catholic Epistles; which too has been said to have been published by another in his name; but gradually, in process of time, it has gained authority. This is he of whom Paul writes, in the Epistle to the Galatians; and he is often mentioned in the Acts of the apostles; and also several times in the gospel, called, ACCORDING TO THE HEBREWS lately translated by me into Greek and Latin."

AUGUSTINE received all the Catholic Epistles. He quotes James as an apostle. He often cites both the Epistles of Peter. He also refers to John's three Epistles, and quotes Jude, and calls him an apostle.

In the works of EPHREM, the Syrian, who lived, and wrote voluminously, in the 4th century, there are express quotations from the Epistle of James, from the Second of Peter, the Second and Third of John, and from Jude, as well as, from those Catholic Epistles which were undisputed.

RUFIN received all the books as Canonical, which are now so esteemed by christians generally.

Why these Epistles have received the appellation of *Catholic*, various reasons have been assigned.

Some have supposed that they were so called, because they contain the one catholic doctrine which was delivered to the churches by the apostles of our Saviour, and which might be read by the universal church.

Others are of opinion that they received this appellation, because they were not addressed to one person, or church, like the Epistles of Paul; but to the Catholic church. This opinion seems not to be correct, for some of them were written to the Christians of particular countries, and others to individuals.

A third opinion, advanced by Dr. Hammond, and adopted by Dr. Macknight, and which has some probability, is, that the First of Peter, and First of John, being received by all Christians, obtained the name of *Catholic*, to distinguish them from those which at first were not universally received; but in process of time, these last coming to be universally received, were put into the same class with the first, and the whole thenceforward had the appellation of *Catholic*.

This denomination is as old as the time of Eusebius, and probably older, for Origen repeatedly called John's First Epistle Catholic; and the same

is done by Dyonisius, Bishop of Alexandria. The same appellation was given to the whole seven by Athanasius, Epiphanius, and Jerome.

Of these, it is probable, that the Epistle of James was first written, but at what precise time, cannot be determined.

As there were two disciples of the name of James, it has been much disputed, to which of them, this Epistle should be attributed. Lardner and Macknight, have rendered it exceedingly probable, that this Epistle was written by James the Less, who is supposed to have been related to our Lord, and who seems for a long time to have had the chief authority in the church at Jerusalem; but Michaelis, is of a different opinion, and says, that he sees no reason for the assertion, that James, the son of Zebedee, was not the author of this Epistle." But the reasons which he assigns for his opinion, have very little weight.

The date of this Epistle, may, with considerable probability, be referred to the year 62; for it is supposed that James was put to death, in the following year.

Its Canonical authority and divine inspiration, although called in question by some, in ancient as well as modern times, ought to be considered as undoubted. One strong evidence that it was thus received by early Christians, may be derived from the old Syriac version of the New Testament; which, while it leaves out several other books, contains this.

It seems not to have been as well known in the Western churches as most other books of Scripture, but learned men have observed, that Clement of Rome has quoted it no less than four times; and it is also quoted by Ignatius in his genuine Epistle to the Ephesians; and we have already shown, that it was received as the writing of the apostle James, by Origen, Athanasius and Jerome.

The First Epistle of Peter has ever been considered authentic, and has been cited by Clement of Rome, Polycarp, The Martyrs of Lyons, Theophilus Bishop of Antioch, Papias, Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian. The only matter of doubt respecting this Epistle is, what place we are to understand by Babylon, where Peter was, when he wrote. On this subject, there are three opinions; the first, that by this name a place in Egypt is signified; the second, that Babylon in Assyria properly so called is meant; and the third, which is generally maintained by the Romanists, and some Protestants, is, that Rome is here called Babylon. Eusebius and Jerome understood, that this Epistle was written from Rome.

The time of this Epistle being written was probably about the year of our Lord 65 or 66.

The date of the Epistle of Jude, may as well be placed about the same period as at any other time, for we have no documents which can guide us to any certain decision. The objection to the Canonical authority of this Epistle, derived from the author's hav-

ing quoted the Apocryphal book of Enoch, is of no validity; for the fact is, that Jude makes no mention of any book, but only of a prophecy, and there is no evidence that the Apocryphal book of Enoch was then in existence; but if he did quote a truth from such a book, it argues no more against his inspiration, than Paul's quoting Epimenides does, against his being an inspired man.

The three Epistles of John were probably written about the year 96 or 97. It has commonly been supposed that the Apocalypse was the last written book of the New Testament, but Townsend insists, that the Three Epistles of John were last written. See Townsend's New Testament, Vol ii.

SECTION XII.

CANONICAL AUTHORITY OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

HERMAS gives many indications of having read the Revelation; for he often imitates John's description of the New Jerusalem; and sometimes borrows his very words. He speaks of the BOOK OF LIFE, and of those whose names are written in it. He speaks also of the Saints, whom he saw, being clothed in garments white as snow.

PAPIAS also, doubtless had seen the book of Revelation; for some of his opinions were founded on a too literal interpretation of certain prophecies of this book. But neither Papias nor Hermas expressly cite the Revelation.

JUSTIN MARTYR, is the first, who gives explicit testimony to the Apocalypse. His words are, "And a man from among us, by name, John, one of the apostles of Christ, in the Revelation made to him, has prophesied, that the believers in our Christ, shall live a thousand years in Jerusalem; and after that shall be the general, and indeed eternal resurrection, and judgment of all men, together."

IN THE EPISTLE OF THE CHURCH AT LYONS AND VIENNE, in France, which was written,

about the year of our Lord, one hundred and eighty, there is one passage cited from the book of Revelation : "For he was indeed a genuine disciple of Christ, *following the Lamb, whithersoever he goes.*"

IRENÆUS expressly quotes the Revelation, and ascribes it to John, the apostle. And in one place, he says, "It (The Revelation,) was seen no long time ago, in our age, at the end of the reign of Domitian." And in the passage preserved by Eusebius, he speaks of the exact and ancient copies of this book; which he says, "was confirmed likewise by the concurring testimony of those who had seen John."

THEOPHILUS of Antioch, also, as we are assured by Eusebius, cited testimonies from the Apocalypse of John, in his book against Hermogenes. And in his works, which are extant, there is one passage which shows, that he was acquainted with the Revelation, "This Eve," says he, "because she was deceived by the serpent—the evil demon, who is also called Satan, who then spoke to her by the serpent—does not cease to accuse : this demon is also called, the Dragon."

The Revelation of John, is often quoted by CLEMENT of Alexandria. In one passage he says, "Such an one, though here on earth, he be not honoured with the first seat, shall sit upon the four and twenty thrones, judging the people, as John says in the Revelation." That Clement be-

lieved it to be the work of the apostle John, is manifest, because in another place, he expressly cites a passage, "As the words of an apostle;" and we have just seen that he ascribes the work to John.

TERTULLIAN cites many things from the Revelation of John; and he seems to have entertained no doubt of its being the writing of the apostle John, as will appear by a few quotations; "John, in his Apocalypse, is commanded to correct those who ate things sacrificed to idols, and commit fornication." Again, "The apostle John, in the Apocalypse, describes a sharp two-edged sword, coming out of the mouth of God."—"We have churches, disciples of John, for though Marcion rejects his Revelation, the succession of bishops, traced to the original, will assure us, that John is the author." And in another place, he has a long quotation from the book of Revelation.

HIPPOLYTUS, who lived in the third century, and had great celebrity, both in the Eastern and Western churches, received the Revelation, as without doubt the production of the apostle John. Indeed, he seems to have written a comment on this book, for Jerome in the list of his works, mentions one, "On the Revelation."

Hippolytus was held in so high esteem, that a noble monument was erected to him in the city of Rome, which after lying for a long time buried, was dug up, near that city, A. D. 1551. His

name, indeed, is not now on the monument, but it contains a catalogue of his works, several of which have the same titles as those ascribed to Hippolytus, by Jerome and Eusebius; together with others, not mentioned by them: among which, is one, "Of the Gospel of John, and THE REVELATION."

ORIGEN calls the writer of the Apocalypse, "Evangelist and apostle;" and on account of the predictions which it contains, "Prophet" also. In his book against Celsus, he mentions, "John's Revelation, and divers other books of Scripture."

It was Origen's intention to write a commentary on this book, but whether he ever carried his purpose into execution, is unknown. Nothing of the kind has reached our times.

DYONISIUS of Alexandria, who lived about the middle of the third century, and was one of the most learned men of his time, has entered into a more particular discussion, of the Canonical authority of the book of Revelation than any other ancient author. From what has been said by him, we learn, on what account it was, that this book, after having been universally received by the earlier Fathers, fell, with some, into a certain degree of discredit. About this time, the Chiliasts, or Millenarians, who held that Christ would reign visibly on earth with his Saints for a thousand years, during which period, all manner of earthly and sensible pleasures would be enjoyed, made their appear-

ance. This opinion they derived from a literal interpretation of some passages in the book of Revelation; and as their error was very repugnant to the feelings of the most of the Fathers, they were led to doubt of the authority, or to disparage the value of the book, from which it was derived.

The first rise of the Millenarians, of the grosser kind, seems to have been in the district of Arsinoe, in Egypt; where one Nepos composed several works in defence of their doctrine; particularly a book "Against the Allegorists." Dyonisius took much pains with these errorists, and entered with them into a free and candid discussion of their opinions, and of the true meaning of the book of Revelation; and had the satisfaction to reclaim a number of them from their erroneous opinions. His own opinion of the Revelation he gives at large, and informs us, that some, who lived before his time, had utterly rejected this book, and ascribed it to Cerinthus; but for his own part, he professes to believe, that it was written by an inspired man, whose name was John, but a different person from the apostle of that name; for which opinion, he assigns several reasons, but none of much weight. His principal reason is, that the language of this book is different from that of the apostle John, in his other writings. To which Lardner judiciously answers, that supposing this to be the fact, it will not prove the point, for the style of prophecy is very different from the epistolary, or historical

style. But this laborious and learned collector of facts, denies, that there is such a difference of style, as to lay a foundation for this opinion: and in confirmation of his own opinion, he descends to particulars, and shows, that there are some striking points of resemblance between the language of the Apocalypse and the acknowledged writings of the apostle John.

The opinion of those persons who believed it to be the work of Cerinthus, is utterly without foundation; for this book contains opinions expressly contrary to those maintained by this heretic; and even on the subject of the Millenium, his views did not coincide with those expressed in the Revelation.

CAIUS seems to have been the only ancient author who attributed this book to Cerinthus, and to him Dyonisius probably referred, when he spoke of some before his time, who held this opinion.

CYPRIAN, bishop of Carthage, received the book of Revelation, as of Canonical authority, as appears by the manner in which he quotes it. "Hear," says he, "in the Revelation; the voice of thy Lord, reproving such men as these, *Thou sayest I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.*"

Again, "So in the Holy Scriptures, by which

Rev. iii. 17.

the Lord would have us to be instructed and warned, is the harlot city described."

Finally, "That waters signify people, the divine Scriptures show, in the Revelation."

VICTORINUS, who lived towards the close of the third century, often cites the book of Revelation, and ascribes it to John the Apostle.

That LACTANTIUS received this book, is manifest, because he has written much respecting the future destinies of the church, which is founded on the prophecies which it contains.

Until the fourth century, then, it appears, that the Revelation was almost universally received; not a writer of any credit calls it in question; and but one hesitates about ascribing it to John the apostle; but even he held it to be written by an inspired man. But about the beginning of the fourth century, it began to fall into discredit with some, on account of the mysterious nature of its contents; and the encouragement which it was supposed to give to the Chiliasts. Therefore Eusebius of Cesarea, after giving a list of such books as were universally received, adds, "After these, if it be thought fit, may be placed the Revelation of John, concerning which we shall observe the different opinions, at a proper time." And again, "There are, concerning this book, different opinions."

This is the first doubt expressed by any respectable writer, concerning the Canonical authority of this book; and Eusebius did not reject it, but would have it placed next after those which were received with universal consent.

And we find, at this very time, the most learned and judicious of the Fathers received the Revelation without scruple, and annexed it to their catalogues of the books of the New Testament.

Thus, ATHANASIUS, after giving an account of the twenty two Canonical books of the Old Testament, proceeds to enumerate the books of the New Testament, in the following manner, which he makes eight in number. 1. Matthew's Gospel; 2. Mark's; 3. Luke's; 4. John's; 5. The Acts; 6. The Catholic Epistles; 7. Paul's Fourteen Epistles; And, 8. The Revelations, given to John the Evangelist and divine, in Patmos.

JEROME, in giving an account of the writings of John the Evangelist, speaks also of another John, called the Presbyter, to whom some ascribed the Second and Third Epistles, under the name of John. And we have already seen, that Dyonisius of Alexandria, ascribed the Revelation to another John. This opinion, we learn from Jerome, originated in the fact, that two monuments were found at Ephesus, each inscribed with the name, JOHN; but he says, "Some think, that both the monuments are of John the Evangelist." Then he proceeds to give some account of the Revelation;

"Domitian," says he "in the fourteenth year of his reign, raising the second persecution after Nero, John was banished into the Isle of Patmos, where he wrote the Revelation, which Justin Martyr and Irenæus explain."

Augustine also received the book of Revelation, and quotes it very frequently.

He ascribes it to the same John, who wrote the Gospel and the Epistles.

From the view which has been taken of the testimonies in favour of the book of Revelation, I think it must appear manifest to every candid reader, that few books in the New Testament, have more complete evidence of Canonical authority, than the book of Revelation. The only thing which requires explanation is, the omission of this book in so many of the catalogues of the Fathers, and of ancient councils. Owing to the mysterious nature of the contents of this book, and to the abuse of its prophecies, by the too literal construction of them, by the Millenarians, it was judged expedient not to have this book read publicly in the churches. Now the end of forming these catalogues was, to guide the people in reading the Scriptures; and as it seems not to have been desired that the people should read this mysterious book, it was omitted by many, in their catalogues. Still, however, a majority of them have it; and some, who omitted it, are known to have received it as Canonical.

This also will account for the fact, that many

of the Manuscripts of the New Testament, are without the Revelation; so that there are extant comparatively few copies of this book.

But the authenticity and authority of the Apocalypse stand on ground, which can never be shaken; and the internal evidence is strong in favour of a divine origin. There is a sublimity, purity, and consistency in it, which could not have proceeded from an impostor. In addition to all which, we observe, that the fulfilment of many of the predictions of this book is so remarkable, that to many learned men who have attended to this subject, the evidence from this source alone, is demonstrative of its divine origin. And there is every reason to believe, that in the revolution of events, this book which is now to many, sealed with seven seals, will be opened, and will be so explained, that all men will see and acknowledge, that it is indeed *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants, things which must shortly come to pass—and sent and signified it by his angel, to his servant John; who bare record of the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

After having given a particular account of the several books of the New Testament, it may be useful to subjoin a few general remarks on the testimony exhibited.

1. The writings of the apostles, from the time

of their first publication, were distinguished by all Christians from all other books. They were spoken of by the Fathers as SCRIPTURE; as DIVINE SCRIPTURE; as INSPIRED OF THE LORD; as, GIVEN BY THE INSPIRATION OF THE HOLY GHOST. The only question ever agitated, respecting any of these books, was, whether they were indeed, the productions of the apostles. When this was clear, no man disputed their divine authority; or considered it lawful to dissent from their dictates. They were considered as occupying the same place, in regard to inspiration and authority, as the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and in imitation of this denomination, they were called the New Testament. The other names by which they were distinguished, were such as these, THE GOSPEL;—THE APOSTLES;—THE DIVINE GOSPELS;—THE EVANGELICAL INSTRUMENT;—THE SCRIPTURES OF THE LORD;—HOLY SCRIPTURES;—EVANGELIC VOICE;—DIVINE SCRIPTURES;—ORACLES OF THE LORD;—DIVINE FOUNTAINS;—FOUNTAINS OF THE DIVINE FULNESS.

2. These books were not in obscurity, but were read with veneration and avidity, by multitudes. They were read not only by the learned, but by the people; not only in private, but constantly in the public assemblies of Christians, as appears by the explicit testimony of Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Eusebius, Cyprian, and Augustine. And no other books were thus venerated and read. If

some other pieces were publicly read, yet the Fathers always made a wide distinction between them and the Sacred Scriptures.

3. In all the controversies which arose in the church, these books were acknowledged by all to be decisive authority, unless by some few of the very worst heretics, who mutilated the Scriptures, and forged others for themselves, under the names of the apostles. But most of the heretics endeavoured to support their opinions, by an appeal to the writings of the New Testament. The Valentinians, the Montanists, the Sabelleians, the Artemonists, the Arians, received the Scriptures of the New Testament. The same was the case with the Priscillianists, and the Pelagians. In the Arian controversy, which occupied the church so long and so earnestly, the Scriptures were appealed to by both parties; and no controversy arose, respecting the authenticity of the books, of the New Testament.

4. The avowed enemies of Christianity, who wrote against the truth, recognized the books which are now in the Canon, as those acknowledged by Christians in their times, for they refer to the matters contained in them, and some of them mention several books by name; so that it appears from the accounts which we have of these writings, that they were acquainted with the volume of the New Testament. Celsus, who lived and wrote less than a hundred years after the apostles, says,

as is testified by Origen who answered him, "I could say many things concerning the affairs of Jesus, and those too, different from what is written by the disciples of Jesus, but I purposely omit them." That Celsus here refers to the gospels, there can be no doubt. In another place, he says, "These things then, we have alleged to you, out of *your own writings.*" And that the gospels to which he referred, were the same as those which we now possess, is evident from his references to matters contained in them.

PORPHYRY, in the third century, wrote largely, and professedly, against the Christian Religion; and although his work has shared the same fate as that of Celsus, yet from some fragments which have been preserved, we can ascertain, that he was well acquainted with the four gospels; for the things to which he objects, are still contained in them.

But the emperor, JULIAN, expressly mentions Matthew and Luke; and cites various things out of the Gospels. He speaks also of John, and alleges, that none of Christ's disciples beside, ascribed to him the creation of the world;—And also, "That neither Paul, nor Matthew, nor Luke, nor Mark, have dared to call Jesus, God;"—"That John wrote later than the other Evangelists, and at a time, when a great number of men in the cities of Greece and Italy were converted." He alludes to the conversion of Cornelius and Sergius Paulus; to Peter's vision; and to the circular

letter sent by the apostles, at Jerusalem, to the churches; which things are recorded in the Acts of the apostles.*

Now, if the genuineness of these books could have been impugned, on any plausible grounds; or if any doubt had existed respecting this matter surely such men as Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian, could not have been ignorant of the matter, and would not have failed to bring forward every thing of this kind which they knew; for their hostility to Christianity was unbounded. And it is certain, that Porphyry did avail himself of an objection of this kind, in regard to the book of Daniel. Since, then, not one of the early enemies of Christianity ever suggested a doubt of the genuineness of the books of the New Testament, we may rest assured, that no ground of doubt existed, in their day; and that the fact of these being the genuine writings of the men whose names they bear, was too clearly established, to admit any doubt. The genuineness of the books of the New Testament having been admitted by friends and enemies,—by the orthodox and heretics, in those ages, when the fact could be ascertained easily; it is too late in the day, *now*, for infidels to call this matter in question.

5. But the testimony which we possess, is not only sufficient to prove, that the books of the New Testament were written by the persons whose names they bear; but also, that these books, in the

* See Lardner and Paley.

early ages of the church, contained the same things which are now read in them. Omitting any particular notice of about half a dozen passages, the genuineness of which is in dispute, I would remark, that when we compare the numerous and copious quotations from these books, which are found in the writings of the Fathers, with our own copies, the argument is most satisfactory. It is true, indeed, that the Fathers do sometimes apparently quote from memory; and in that case, the words of the sacred writer are a little changed or transposed, but the sense is accurately retained. In general, however, the quotations of Scripture, in the writings of the Fathers, are verbally exact; there being no other variation, than what arises from the different idiom of the language which they use. I suppose, that almost every verse, in some books of the New Testament, has been cited by one or another of the Fathers; so that if that book were lost, it might be restored, by means of the quotations from it in other books.

But, besides these quotations, we have versions of the whole New Testament, into various languages, some of which were made very early, probably, not much later than the end of the first, or beginning of the second century. Now, on a comparison, all these versions contain the same discourses, parables, miracles, doctrines, precepts, and divine institutions. Indeed, so literal have been most versions of the New Testament, that

they answer to one another, and to the original, almost word for word.

Besides, there are in existence, hundreds and thousands of Manuscripts of the New Testament, which were written in different ages of the church, from the fourth or fifth century, until the sixteenth. Most of these have been penned with great care, and in the finest style of Calligraphy. The oldest are written on beautiful parchment, in what are called *uncial*, or capital letters. Some of these Manuscripts, contain all the books of the New Testament; others only a part; and in some instances, a single book. Some are in a state of good preservation, while others are worn and mutilated; and the writing so obscure, as to be scarcely legible. And what is very remarkable, some copies of the New Testament on parchment, have been found written over again with other matter, after the original words had been as fully obliterated as could easily be done. This seems a very strange practice, considering that good copies of the Bible must have been always too few; but the scarcity of parchment was so great, that men who were anxious to communicate their own lucubrations to the public, would resort to any shift, to procure the materials for writing. And this is not more culpable or more wonderful, than what has been known to take place in our own land and times, where the leaves of Walton's Polyglot

Bible, have been torn and used for wrapping paper.

The exact age of the oldest MSS. of the New Testament cannot be accurately ascertained, as they have no dates accompanying them which can safely be depended on: but as it is pretty well known at what period Greek accents were introduced; and also, when the large or uncial letter, as it is called, was exchanged for the small letter now in common use; if a MS. is found written in the old fashion, in large letters, without intervals between the words, and without accents, it is known that it must be more ancient than the period when the mode of writing was changed. Now, it is manifest, that when these MSS. were penned, the Canon was settled by common consent; for they all contain the same books, as far as they go.

I will sum up my observations on the Canon, of the New Testament, by quoting a sensible and very appropriate passage, from the late learned Mr. Rennell. It is found, in his Remarks on Hone's Collection of the Apocryphal writings of the apostolic age.

"*When*, was the Canon of Scripture determined. It was determined immediately after the death of St. John, the last survivor of the Apostolic order. The canon of the Gospels was indeed determined before his death, for we read in Eusebius, that he gave his sanction to the three

other Gospels, and completed this part of the New Testament with his own. By the death of St. John the catalogue of Scripture was completed and closed. We have seen both from the testimony of themselves and of their immediate successors, that the inspiration of writing was confined strictly to the apostles, and accordingly we find, that no similar pretensions were ever made by any true christian to a similar authority.

"*By whom* was the Canon of Scripture determined? It was determined not by the decision of any individual, nor by the decree of any council, but by the general consent of the whole and every part of the Christian Church. It is indeed a remarkable circumstance, that among the various disputes which so early agitated the church, the Canon of Scripture was never a subject of controversy. If any question might be said to have arisen, it was in reference to one or two of those books which are included in the present canon; but with respect to those which are out of the Canon, no difference of opinion ever existed.

"The reason of this agreement is a very satisfactory one. Every one who is at all versed in Ecclesiastical History is aware of the continual intercourse, which took place in the Apostolical age between the various branches of the church universal. This communication, as Mr. Nolan has well observed, arose out of the Jewish polity, under

which, various synagogues of the Jews which were dispersed throughout the Gentile world, were all subjected to the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem, and maintained a constant correspondence with it. Whenever then an epistle arrived at any particular church, it was first authenticated; it was then read to all the holy brethren, and was subsequently transmitted to some other neighbouring church. Thus we find that the authentication of the Epistles of Paul was, "The salutation with his own hand." by which the church to which the Epistle was first addressed, might be assured that it was not a forgery. We find also a solemn adjuration of the same apostle, that his Epistle, 'should be read to all the holy brethren.' When this Epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that ye likewise read the Epistle from Laodicea.' From this latter passage we infer, that the system of transmission was a very general one, as the Epistle which St. Paul directs the Colossians to receive from the Laodiceans was not originally directed to the latter, but was sent to them from some other church. To prevent any mistake or fraud, this transmission was made by the highest authority, namely by that of the bishop. Through him, official communications were sent from one church to another, even in the remotest countries. Clement, the bishop of Rome, communicated with

2 Thes. iii. 17. 1 Thes. v. 27. Col. iv. 6.

the church at Corinth; Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna, wrote an Epistle to the Philippians; Ignatius, the bishop of Antioch, corresponded with the churches of Rome, of Magnesia, of Ephesus, and others. These three bishops were the companions and immediate successors of the apostles, and followed the system of correspondence and intercourse which their masters had begun. Considering all these circumstances, we shall be convinced how utterly improbable it was, that any authentic work of an apostle should have existed in one church, without being communicated to another. It is a very mistaken notion of Dodwell, that the books of the New Testament, lay concealed in the coffers of particular churches, and were not known to the rest of the world until the late days of Trajan. This might have been perfectly true, with respect to the originals, which were doubtless, guarded with peculiar care, in the custody of the particular churches, to which they were respectively addressed. But copies of these originals, attested by the authority of the bishop, were transmitted from one church to another, with the utmost freedom, and were thus rapidly dispersed throughout the Christian world. As a proof of this, St. Peter, in an Epistle addressed generally to the churches in Asia, speaks of "All the Epistles of Paul," as a body of Scripture universally circulated and known.

"The number of the apostles, including Paul

and Barnabas was but fourteen—to these, and these alone, in the opinion of the early church, was the inspiration of writing confined, out of these, six only deemed it necessary to write; what they did write, was authenticated with the greatest caution, and circulated with the utmost rapidity; what was received in any church as the writing of an apostle, was publicly read; no church was left to itself, or to its own direction; but was frequently visited by the apostles, and corresponded with by their successors. All the distant members of the church universal, in the apostles' age, being united by frequent intercourse, and communication, became one body in Christ. Taking all these things into consideration, we shall see with what ease and rapidity the Canon of Scripture would be formed, there being no room either for fraudulent fabrication on the one hand, or for arbitrary rejection on the other. The case was too clear to require any formal discussion, nor does it appear that there was any material forgery, that could render it necessary.

The writings of the apostles, and of the apostles alone, were received as the word of God, and were separated from all others, by that most decisive species of authority, the authority of a general, an immediate, and an undisputed consent.

This will appear the more satisfactory to our minds, if we take an example from the age in which we live. The letters of Junius for instance, were

published at intervals within a certain period. Since the publication of the last authentic letter, many under that signature have appeared, purporting to have been written by the same author. But this circumstance throws no obscurity over the matter, nor is the Canon of Junius, if I may transfer the term from sacred to secular writing, involved in any difficulty or doubt. If it should be hereafter inquired, at what time, or by what authority the authentic letters were separated from the spurious, the answer will be, that such a separation never took place; but that the Canon of Junius was immediately determined after the last letter. To us who live so near the time of publication, the line of distinction between the genuine and spurious is so strongly marked, and the evidence of authenticity on the one side, and of forgery on the other, is so clear and convincing, that a formal rejection of the latter, is unnecesary. The case has long since been determined by the tacit consent of the whole British nation, and no man in his senses would attempt to dispute it.

"Yet how much stronger is the case of the Scriptural Canon. The author of Junius was known to none, he could not therefore of himself bear any testimony to the authenticity of his works; the authors of the New Testament were known to all, and were especially careful to mark, to authenticate, and to distinguish their writings. The author of Junius had no personal character which could stamp

his writing with any high or special authority; whatever proceeded from the apostles of Christ, was immediately regarded as the offspring of an exclusive inspiration. For the Canon of Junius we have no external evidence, but that of a single publisher: for the Canon of Scripture we have the testimony of churches which were visited, bishops who were appointed, and converts innumerable, who were instructed by the apostles themselves. It was neither the duty nor the interest of any one, excepting the publisher, to preserve the volume of Junius from spurious editions: to guard the integrity of the sacred volume was the bounden duty of every Christian who believed that its words were the words of eternal life.

"If then, notwithstanding these and other difficulties, which might be adduced, the Canon of Junius, is established beyond controversy or dispute, by the tacit consent of all who live in the age in which it was written; there can be no reason why the Canon of Scripture, under circumstances infinitely stronger, should not have been determined in a manner precisely the same; especially when we remember, that in both cases, the forgeries made their appearance, subsequently to the determination of the Canon. There is not a single book in the spurious department of the Apocryphal volume which was even known, when the Canon of Scripture was determined. This is a fact which considerably strengthens the case.

There was no difficulty or dispute in framing the Canon of Scripture, because there were no competitors, whose claims it was expedient to examine, no forgeries whose impostures it was necessary to detect. The first age of the church, was an age of too much vigilance, of too much communication, of too much authority for any fabrication of Scripture, to hope for success. If any attempt was made it was instantly crushed. When the authority of the apostles and of apostolic men had lost its influence, and heresies and disputes had arisen, then it was that forgeries began to appear . . . Nothing, indeed, but the general and long determined consent of the whole Christian world, could have preserved the sacred volume in its integrity, unimpaired by the mutilation of one set of heretics, and unincumbered by the forgeries of another."

SECTION XIII.

NO CANONICAL BOOK OF THE NEW TESTAMENT HAS BEEN LOST.

This was a subject of warm dispute between the Romanists and Protestants, at the time of the Reformation. The former, to make room for their farrago of unwritten traditions, maintained the affirmative; and such men as Bellarmine and Pineda asserted roundly, that some of the most valuable parts of the Canonical Scriptures were lost. The Protestants, on the other hand, to support the sufficiency and perfection of the Holy Scriptures, the corner stone of the Reformation, strenuously and successfully contended, that no part of the Canonical volume had been lost.

But the opinion that some inspired books, which once belonged to the Canon, have been lost, has been maintained by some more respectable writers, than those Romanists just mentioned. Chrysostom, Theophylact, Calvin, and Whitaker, have all, in some degree, countenanced the same opinion, in order to avoid some difficulty, or to answer some particular purpose. The subject, so far as the Old Testament is concerned, has already been considered; it shall now be our endeavour to show, that

no Canonical book of the New Testament has been lost.

And here, I am ready to concede, as was before done, that there may have been books written by inspired men, that have been lost: for inspiration was occasional, not constant; and confined to matters of faith, and not afforded on the affairs of this life; or in matters of mere science. If Paul, or Peter, or any other Apostle, had occasion to write private letters to their friends, on subjects not connected with religion, there is no reason to think, that these were inspired; and if such writings have been lost, the Canon of Scripture has suffered no more, by this means, than by the loss of any other uninspired books.

But again, I am willing to go farther, and say, that it is possible, (although I know no evidence of the fact,) that some things, written under the influence of inspiration, for a particular occasion, and to rectify some disorder in a particular church, may have been lost, without injury to the Canon. For, as much that the apostles preached by inspiration, is undoubtedly lost; so there is no reason why every word which they wrote must necessarily be preserved, and form a part of the Canonical volume. For example, suppose that when Paul said, 1 Cor. v. 9. *I wrote to you in an Epistle not to company with fornicators,* he referred to an Epistle which he had written to the Corinthians, before the one now called, the First, it might never

have been intended that this letter should form a constituent part of the Canon: for although it treated of subjects connected with Christian faith or practice; yet, an occasion having arisen, in a short time, of treating these subjects more at large, every thing in that Epistle, (supposing it ever to have been written,) may have been included in the two Epistles to the Corinthians, which are now in the Canon. Or, to adopt for illustration, the ingenious hypothesis of Dr. Lightfoot; the Epistle referred to, which was sent by Timothy, who took a circuitous route through Macedonia, might not have reached them, until Paul wrote the long and interesting Epistle, called, the First to the Corinthians; and thus the former one would be superseded. But we adduce this case, merely for illustration; for we will attempt, presently, to show, that no evidence exists, that any such Epistle was ever written.

1. The first argument to prove that no Canonical book has been lost, is derived from the watchful care of Providence, over the Sacred Scriptures.

Now to suppose that a book written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and intended to form a part of the Canon, which is the rule of faith to the church, should be utterly and irrecoverably lost, is surely not very honourable to the wisdom of God; and no how consonant with the ordinary method of his dispensations, in regard to his precious truth. There is good reason to think, that

if God saw it needful, and for the edification of the church, that such books should be written, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, by his providence he would have taken care to preserve them from destruction. We do know, that this treasure of divine truth has been, in all ages, and in the worst times, the special care of God, or not one of the sacred books would now be in existence. And if one Canonical book might be lost through the negligence or unfaithfulness of men, why not all? And thus the end of God in making a revelation of his will, might have been defeated.

But whatever other corruptions have crept into the Jewish or Christian churches, it does not appear, that either of them as a body, ever incurred the censure of having been careless in preserving the Oracles of God. Our Saviour never charges the Jews, who perverted the Sacred Scriptures to their own ruin, with having lost any portion of the sacred deposit, intrusted to them.

History informs us of the fierce and malignant design of Antiochus Epiphanes, to abolish every vestige of the sacred volume; but the same history assures us, that the Jewish people manifested a heroic fortitude, and invincible patience, in resisting and defeating his impious purpose. They chose rather to sacrifice their lives, and suffer a cruel death, than to deliver up the copies of the Sacred volume, in their possession. And the same spirit was manifested, and with the same result, in

the Dioclesian persecution of the Christians. Every effort was made to obliterate the sacred writings of Christians, and multitudes suffered death for refusing to deliver up the New Testament. Some, indeed, overcome by the terrors of a cruel persecution, did, in the hour of temptation, consent to surrender the holy book; but they were ever afterwards called *traitors;* and it was with the utmost difficulty, that any of them could be received again, into the communion of the church; after a long repentance, and the most humbling confessions of their fault. Now, if any Canonical book was ever lost, it must have been in these early times, when the word of God was valued far above life, and when every Christian stood ready to seal the truth with his blood.

2. Another argument, which appears to me to be convincing, is, that in a little time, all the sacred books were dispersed over the whole world. If a book had, by some accident or violence, been destroyed in one region, the loss could soon have been repaired, by sending for copies to other countries.

The considerations just mentioned, would, I presume, be satisfactory to all candid minds, were it not, that it is supposed, that there is evidence that some things were written by the Apostles, which are not now in the Canon. We have already referred to an Epistle to the Corinthians, which Paul is supposed to have written to them,

previously to the writing of those which we now possess. But it is by no means certain, or even probable, that Paul ever did write such an Epistle: for not one ancient writer makes the least mention of any such letter; nor is there any where to be found any citation from it, or any reference to it.

It is a matter of testimony, in which all the Fathers concur, as with one voice, that Paul wrote no more than fourteen Epistles, all of which we now have.

The testimony of Clement of Rome, is clear on this subject; and he was the friend and companion of Paul, and must have known which was the First Epistle addressed by him to the Corinthian church. He says, in a passage before cited, "Take again the Epistle of the blessed Apostle Paul into your hands. What was it that he *first wrote to you*, in the beginning of his Epistle? He did truly by the Spirit write to you concerning himself, and Cephas, and Apollos, because even at that time, you were formed into divisions or parties."

The only objection which can be conceived to this testimony, is, that Clement's words, when literally translated, read, "Take again the Gospel (Εὐαγγελίς) of the blessed apostle Paul;" but it is well known, that the early Fathers called any book, containing the doctrines of Christ, the Gospel; and in this case, all reasonable doubt is precluded, because Clement identifies the writing, to which he referred, by mentioning some of its con-

tents, which are found in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, and nowhere else.

But still, Paul's own declaration, stands in the way of our opinion, *I wrote to you in an Epistle;* the words in the original are, Ἔγραψα ὑμῖν ἐν τῇ ἐπιστολῇ, the literal version of which is, *I have written to you in the Epistle, or, in this Epistle;* that is, in the former part of it; where, in fact, we find the very thing which he says, that he had written. See v. 2, 5, 6, of this same 5th chapter. But it is thought by learned and judicious commentators, that the words following, Νυνὶ δὲ ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, *but now I have written unto you,* require, that we should understand the former clause, as relating to some former time; but a careful attention to the context will convince us, that this reference is by no means necessary. The apostle had told them, in the beginning of the chapter, to avoid the company of fornicators, &c.; but it is manifest, from the 10th verse, that he apprehended that his meaning might be misunderstood, by extending the prohibition too far, so as to decline all intercourse with the world, therefore he repeats what he had said, and informs them, that it had relation only to the professors of Christianity, who should be guilty of such vices. The whole may be thus paraphrased, "I wrote to you above, in my letter, that you should separate from those who were fornicators; and that you

should purge them out as old leaven; but fearing lest you should misapprehend my meaning, by inferring that I have directed you to avoid all intercourse with the heathen around you, who are addicted to these shameful vices, which would make it necessary that you should go out of the world, I now inform you, that my meaning is, that you do not associate familiarly with any who make a profession of Christianity, and yet continue in these evil practices."

In confirmation of this interpretation, we can adduce the Old Syriac Version, which having been made soon after the days of the apostles, is good testimony, in relation to this matter of fact. In this venerable version, the meaning of the 11th verse, is thus given, "This is what I have written unto you," or, "The meaning of what I have written unto you."*

Dr. Whitby understands this passage, in a way different from any that has been mentioned; the reader is referred to his commentary, on the place.

And we have before mentioned the ingenious conjecture of Dr. Lightfoot, to which there is no objection, except, that it is totally unsupported by evidence.

It deserves to be mentioned here, that there is now extant, a Letter from Paul to the Corinthians, distinct from those Epistles of his, which we have

* See Jones on the Canon, Vol. i. p. 139, 140.

in the Canon; and also an Epistle from the church of Corinth, to Paul. These Epistles are in the Armenian language, but have been translated into Latin. The Epistle ascribed to Paul is very short, and undoubtedly spurious. It contains no prohibitions, relative to keeping company with fornicators. It was never cited by any of the early writers; nor indeed heard of, until within a century past. It contains some unsound opinions, concerning the speedy appearance of Christ, which Paul, in some of his Epistles, took pains to contradict.

The manner of salutation, is very different from that of Paul; and this apostle is made to declare, that he had received what he taught them, from the former apostles, which is contrary to his repeated solemn asseveration, in several of his Epistles.

In regard to the Epistle under the name of the Church of Corinth, it does not properly fall under our consideration, for if it was genuine, it would have no claim to a place in the Canon.

The curious reader, will find a literal translation of both these Epistles, in Jones's New method of settling the Canon.*

The only other passage in the New Testament, which has been thought to refer to an Epistle of Paul, not now extant, is that in Col. iv. 16.

* Vol. i. p. 14.

And when this Epistle is read among you, cause also that it be read in the church of the Laodiceans, and that ye likewise read the Epistle from Laodicea.

Now, there is clear evidence, that so early as the beginning of the second century, there existed an Epistle, under this title; but it was not received by the church, but was in the hands of Marcion, who was a famous forger and corrupter of Sacred books. He was contemporary with Polycarp, and therefore very near to the times of the apostles, but he was stigmatized as an enemy of the truth; for he had the audacity to form a Gospel, according to his own mind, which went by his name; and also an Apostolicon, which contained only ten of Paul's Epistles; and these altered and accommodated to his own notions. These according to Epiphanius, were, *The Epistle to the Galatians, the two to the Corinthians, to the Romans, the two to the Thessalonians, to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Philippians.*—And, says he, "He takes in, some part of that which is called, THE EPISTLE TO THE LAODICEANS, and this he styles, the eleventh, of those received by Marcion."

Tertullian, however, gives a very different account of this matter. He asserts, "That Marcion and his followers, called that the Epistle to the Laodiceans, which was the Epistle to the Ephesians: 'which Epistle,' says he, 'we are assured

by the testimony of the church, was sent to the Ephesians, and not to the Laodiceans; though Marcion has taken upon him, falsely, to prefix that title to it, pretending therein, to have made some notable discovery." And, again, "I shall say nothing now of that other Epistle, which we have inscribed to the Ephesians; but the heretics entitle it, to the Laodiceans."

This opinion, which by Tertullian is ascribed to Marcion, respecting the true title of the Epistle to the Ephesians, has been adopted, and ingeniously defended, by several distinguished moderns, as Grotius, Hammond, Whitby, and Paley. They rely principally on internal evidence; for unless Marcion be accepted as a witness, I do not recollect that any of the early writers can be quoted in favour of that opinion; but in the course of this work, we have put down the express testimony of some of the most respectable and learned of the Fathers, on the other side; and all those passages in the Epistle, which seem inconsistent with its being addressed to the Ephesians, and neighbouring churches of Asia, can easily be explained. See Lardner and Macknight.

But there is also AN EPISTLE TO THE LAODICEANS, now extant, against which nothing can be said, except that almost every thing contained in it, is taken out of Paul's other Epistles, so that if it should be received, we add nothing in reality to the Canon; and if it should be rejected, we

lose nothing. The reader may find a translation of this Epistle, inserted in the notes at the end of the volume.

But what evidence is there, that Paul ever wrote an Epistle to the Laodiceans? The text on which this opinion has been founded, in ancient and modern times, correctly interpreted, has no such import. The words in the original are, καὶ τὴν ἐκ Λαοδικείας ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀναγνῶτε. *And that ye likewise read the Epistle from Laodicea.* These words have been differently understood; for by them some understand, that an Epistle had been written by Paul to the Laodiceans, which he desired might be read in the church at Colosse. Chrysostom seems to have understood them thus; and the Romish writers, almost universally, have adopted this opinion. "Therefore," says Bellarmine, "it is certain that Paul's Epistle to the Laodiceans is now lost." And their opinion is favoured by the Latin Vulgate, where we read, *Eamque Laodicensium; that which is of the Laodiceans;* but, even these words admit of another construction.

Many learned Protestants, also, have embraced the same interpretation; while others suppose, that Paul here refers to the Epistle to the Ephesians, which they think he sent to the Laodiceans: and that the present inscription is spurious.

Col. iv. 16.

But that neither of these opinions is correct, may be rendered very probable. In regard to the latter, we have already said as much as is necessary; and that Paul could not intend by the language used in the passage under consideration, an Epistle written by himself, will appear by the following arguments.

1. Paul could not with any propriety of speech, have called an Epistle written by himself, and sent to the Laodiceans, an Epistle *from* Laodicea. He certainly would have said, προς Λαοδικειαν, or some such thing. Who ever heard of an Epistle addressed to any individual, or to any society, denominated, an Epistle, from them?

2. If the Epistle referred to in this passage, had been one written by Paul, it would have been most natural for him to call it his Epistle, and this would have rendered his meaning incapable of misconstruction.

3. All those best qualified to judge of the fact, and who were well acquainted with Paul's history and writings, never mention any such Epistle: neither Clement, Hermas, nor the Syriac Interpreter, knew any thing of such an Epistle of Paul; and no one seems to have had knowledge of any such writing, except Marcion, who probably forged it to answer his own purposes. But whether Marcion did acknowledge an Epistle different from all that we have in the Canon, rests on the authority of Epiphanius, who wrote a criti-

cism on the Apostolicon of Marcion; but as we have seen, Tertullian tells us a different story. It is of little importance to decide which of these testimonies is most credible: for Marcion's authority, at best, is worthless, on such a subject.

But it may be asked, to what Epistle then, does Paul refer? To this inquiry, various answers have been given, and perhaps nothing determinate can now be said. Theophylact was of opinion, that Paul's First Epistle to Timothy, was here intended. But this is not probable. Dr. Lightfoot conjectures, that it was the First Epistle of John, which he supposes, was written from Laodicea. Others have thought that it was the Epistle of Paul to Philemon. But it seems safest, in such a case, where testimony is deficient, to follow the literal sense of the words, and to believe, that it was an Epistle written by the Laodiceans, probably to himself, which he had sent to the Colossians, together with his own Epistle, for their perusal.

That the Epistle which is now extant, is not the same as that which formerly existed, at least as early as the fourth century, is evident from the quotations from the ancient Epistle, by Epiphanius; for no such words as he cites, are in the Epistle, now extant. But candour requires that it be mentioned, that they are contained in the Epistle to the Ephesians. Let this weigh as much as it is worth, in favour of the opinion, that the apostle, in

the passage under consideration, refers to the Epistle to the Ephesians. This opinion, however, is perfectly consistent with our position, that NO CANONICAL BOOK OF THE NEW TESTAMENT HAS BEEN LOST.

This proposition, we hope, will now appear to the reader, sufficiently established.

SECTION XIV.

RULES FOR DETERMINING WHAT BOOKS ARE APOCRYPHAL—SOME ACCOUNT OF THE APOCRYPHAL BOOKS WHICH HAVE BEEN LOST—ALL OF THEM CONDEMNED BY THE FOREGOING RULES—REASON OF THE ABOUNDING OF SUCH BOOKS.

Of the Apocryphal books of the New Testament, the greater part have long since sunk into oblivion, but a few of them are still extant. All of them can be proved to be spurious, or at least not Canonical. Their claims have so little to support them, that they might be left to that oblivion, into which they have so generally fallen, were it not, that from time to time, persons unfriendly to our present Canon, bring forward these books, and pretend that some of them, at least, have as good claims to Canonical authority, as those which are received. It will be satisfactory to the reader, therefore, to know the names of these books, and to understand the principles on which they have been uniformly rejected by the church.

In the first place, then, I will mention the rules laid down by the Rev. Jeremiah Jones, by which it may be determined that a book is Apocryphal, and then I will give some account of the books of this class, which have been lost; and finally, consider the character of those which are still extant.

1. *That book is certainly Apocryphal, which contains manifest contradictions.*

The reason of this rule, is too evident to need any elucidation.

2. *That book is Apocryphal, which contains any doctrine or history, plainly contrary to those which are certainly known to be true.*

This rule also is too clear to require any thing to be said in confirmation of its propriety.

3. *That book is Apocryphal which contains any thing ludicrous or trifling, or which abounds in silly and fabulous stories.*

This rule is not only true, but of great importance, in this inquiry; as on examination, it will be found, that the largest part of apocryphal books may be detected by the application of this single rule.

4. *That book is Apocryphal, which mentions things of a date much later than the time in which the author, under whose name it goes, lived.*

This rule does not apply to predictions of future events, which events occurred long after the death of the prophet; but to a reference to facts, or names of places, or persons, as existing when the book was written, which are known to have existed, only at a period long since the time when the supposed author lived. The rule will be better understood, if illustrated by particular examples. The book entitled, THE CONSTITUTIONS OF THE APOSTLES, speaks of the controversy which

arose in the third century, respecting the rebaptization of heretics, therefore, it is not the wor of Clement of Rome, to whom it has been ascribed, nor was it written in his time, but long afterwards.

Again, the book under the name of HEGESIPPUS is not genuine, for it mentions Constantine, and Constantinople, which had no existence until long after the death of HEGESIPPUS.

Moreover, in THE CONSTITUTIONS OF THE APOSTLES, there is mention of rites and ceremonies, relative to baptism, fasting, celibacy, &c. which it is certain had no existence in the times of the apostles, therefore this book was not written by an apostolical man, nor in the days of the apostles, but centuries afterwards.

5. *That book is Apocryphal, the style of which is entirely different from the known style of the author, to whom it is ascribed.*

It is easy to counterfeit an author's name, age, country, opinions, &c. ; but it will be found almost impossible to imitate his style. An author, it is true, may vary his style, to suit different subjects, but there is commonly some peculiarity by which he may be distinguished, from all others. "Jerome," says Sixtus, "writes one way, in his epistles, another in his controversies, a third, in his commentaries ;—one way when young, another when old, yet he always so writes, that you may know him to be the same Jerome still, as a man

knows his friend, under all the various casts and turns of his countenance."

Thus, Augustine says of Cyprian, "His style has a certain peculiar face, by which it may be known."

It should be remembered, however, that this rule, although it may often furnish a certain detection of spurious writings, is one which requires much caution in the application. There is need of a long and intimate acquaintance with the style of an author, before we are competent to determine whether a book could have been written by him: and the difference ought to be very distinctly marked, before we make it the ground of any important judgment, respecting the genuineness of a work ascribed to him, especially if there be external evidence in its favour. In fact, too free an application of this rule has led to many errors, both in ancient and modern times.

6. *That book is spurious and Apocryphal, whose idiom and dialect are different from those of the country, to which the reputed author belonged.*

The idiom and dialect of a language, are very different from the style of an author. Every language is susceptible of every variety of style, but the idiom is the same, in all who use the language: it is the peculiarity, not of an individual, but of a whole country.

But as every writer has a style of his own, which

cannot easily be imitated by another; so, every country has an idiom, which other nations, even if they learn the language, cannot, without great difficulty, acquire. And for the same reason that a writer cannot acquire the idiom of a foreign tongue, he cannot divest himself of the peculiarities of his own.

An Englishman can scarcely write and speak the French language, so as not to discover by his idiom, that it is not his vernacular tongue. Hence also, a North Britton can be distinguished, not only from the peculiarity of his pronunciation, but by his idiom. And this is the reason, that modern scholars can never write Latin, in the manner of the classic authors.

This rule, therefore, is of great importance in detecting the spuriousness of a book, when the real author lived after the time of the person whose name is assumed, or in a country where a different language, or a different dialect, was in use. It will be found almost impossible, to avoid phrases and modes of speech, which were not in use in the time of the person, under whose name the work is edited: and the attempt at imitating an idiom which is not perfectly familiar, leads to an affectation and stiffness of manner, which usually betrays the impostor.

The influence of native idiom, appears no where more remarkably, than in the writings of the New Testament. These books, although written in the

Greek tongue, contain an idiom so manifestly different from that of the language in common use at that time, that it cannot but be observed by all, who have even a superficial acquaintance with Grecian literature.

The fact is, as has often been observed by learned men, that while the words of these books are Greek, the idiom is Hebrew. The writers had, from their infancy, been accustomed to the Syro-Chaldaic language, which is a corruption of the ancient Hebrew. Now, this peculiarity of idiom could never have been successfully imitated by any native Greek; nor by any one, not early conversant with the vernacular tongue of Palestine, at that time. When, therefore, men of other countries, and other times, undertook to publish books, under the name of the apostles, the imposture was manifest at once, to all capable of judging correctly on the subject; because, although they could write in the same language as the apostles, they could not possibly imitate their idiom. This therefore furnishes a most important characteristic, to distinguish between the genuine writings of the apostles, and such as are supposititious.

7. *That book is spurious which exhibits a disposition and temper of mind, very different from that of the person to whom it is ascribed.*

This rule depends on a principle in human nature, well understood, and needs no particular elucidation.

8. *That book is not genuine, which consists principally of mere extracts from other books.* This is also so evident, that it requires no illustration.

9. *Those books which were never cited, nor referred to as Scripture, by any writer of credit for the first four hundred years after the apostles' days, is Apocryphal.*

10. *Those books which were expressly rejected by the Fathers of the first ages as spurious, and attributed by them to heretics, are Apocryphal.*

By the application of the foregoing rules, it can be shown, that every book which claims Canonical authority, not included in our present Canon, is apocryphal. When we denominate all books apocryphal, which are not Canonical, we do not mean to reduce them all to the same level. A book which is not Canonical may be a very instructive and useful book. As a human composition, it may deserve to be highly esteemed; and as the writing of a pious and eminent man of antiquity, it may claim peculiar respect.

The ancient method of division was more accurate than ours. They divided all books into three classes; first, the Canonical; secondly, the Ecclesiastical; and thirdly, the Spurious. And there is reason to believe, that some books which were written without the least fraudulent design, by anonymous authors, have, by the ignorance of their successors, been ascribed to the wrong persons.

That the Fathers did sometimes cite apocryphal books, in their writings, is true; but so did Paul cite the Heathen Poets. If these books are sometimes mentioned, without any note of disapprobation annexed, it can commonly be clearly ascertained from other places in the same author, that he held them to be Apocryphal. Thus, ORIGEN, in one place, quotes THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THE HEBREWS, without any expression of disapprobation; but in another place, he rejects it, as spurious, and declares, "That the church receives no more than four gospels."

Sometimes, the Fathers cited these Apocryphal books, to show that their knowledge was not confined to their own books, and that they did not reject others, through ignorance of their contents. Remarkably to this purpose, are the words of Origen. "The church," says he, "receives only four gospels: heretics have many, such as, the gospel of the Egyptians, the gospel of Thomas, &c.: these we read, that we may not seem to be ignorant, to those who think they know something extraordinary, if they are acquainted with those things which are recorded in these books."

To the same purpose, speaks AMBROSE; for having mentioned several of these books, he says, "We read these that they may not be read by others; we read them, that we may not seem to be ignorant; we read them, not that we receive them, but that we may reject them; and may

know what those things are of which they make such a boast."

In some instances, it seems probable, that some of the Fathers took passages out of these books, because they were acknowledged by those against whom they were writing; being willing to dispute with them on their own principles, and to confute them by their own books.

It may perhaps be true also, that one or two of the Fathers, cited passages from these books, because they contained facts, not recorded in the Canonical gospels. The apostle John informs us, that our Lord performed innumerable miracles, besides those which he had recorded, *the which, if they should be written, every one, I suppose the world itself, could not contain the books which should be written.* Now, some tradition, of some of these things, would undoubtedly be handed down as low as to the second century, and might find its way into some of the Apocryphal gospels, and might be cited by persons who did not believe the book to be of Canonical authority, just as we refer to any profane author, for the proof of such facts as are credibly related by them. There is, at least, one example of this. JEROME, refers to the gospel according to the Hebrews, for a fact: and yet he most explicitly rejects this book, as Apocryphal.

The only books which were ever read in the churches, besides the Canonical, were a few writ-

ten by apostolical men; which, although not written by a plenary inspiration, were the genuine writings of the persons whose names they bore, and were pious productions, and tended to edification; such as, the Epistle of Clement, the Shepherd of Hermas, and the Epistle of Barnabas; but no spurious books were ever read in the churches.

None of the writings falsely ascribed to Christ and his apostles, ever acquired so much authority, as to be publicly read in any church, as far as we know. Indeed, although the Apocryphal books of the New Testament, were very numerous, yet they did not appear in the age of the church, next after the times of the apostles. In the first century, no books of this description are referred to, unless we suppose that Luke, in the beginning of his gospel, intends to speak of such. In the second century, a few spurious writings began to be first put into circulation, as, THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THE HEBREWS; THE GOSPEL OF TRUTH, used by the Valentinians; THE PREACHING OF PETER; THE TRADITIONS OF MATTHIAS; THE ACTS OF PAUL AND THECLA; THE GOSPEL OF MARCION; THE REVELATION OF CERINTHUS; and a few others of less note. But in the third century, the number of Apocryphal books, was considerably increased; and in the fourth and fifth centuries, they were exceedingly multiplied.

If it be inquired, how it happened that so many

Apocryphal books were written, it may confidently be answered, that the principal cause was, the abounding of heresies. Almost all the spurious writings, under the names of the apostles, are the productions of heretics, as we learn from the testimony of those Fathers who have made mention of them. It is, however, true, that some mistaken well-meaning people, thought, that they could add honour to the apostles, or contribute to the edification of the church, by resorting to (what have improperly been called) *pious frauds*. They imagined, also, that they could recommend Christianity to the Gentiles, by inventing stories, which they rashly pretended, were sayings, or actions of Christ. Thus adopting the pernicious maxim, so peremptorily denounced by Paul, *that we may do evil that good may come;* or that the goodness of the end, will satisfy the badness of the means. Of this, we have one remarkable example, in the spurious book, still extant, entitled, *The Acts of Paul and Thecla*, which a certain Asiatic presbyter confessed that he had forged, and assigned as his reason for this forgery, that he wished to show respect to Paul. But in connexion with this fact, we have satisfactory proof of the vigilance of the church, in guarding the Sacred Canon from corruption; for the book was no sooner published, than a strict inquiry was instituted into its origin, and the presbyter mentioned above, having been detected as the author,

was deprived of his office in the church. This account is given by Tertullian; and Jerome adds, that the detection of this forgery was made by the apostle John.

It is probable, also, that some of these books were written without any evil purpose, by weak men, who wrote down all the stories they had received by tradition; for, no doubt, a multitude of traditions respecting Christ and his apostles, with extravagant distortions and additions, would be handed down for several generations.

By all these means, the number of Apocryphal books of the New Testament was greatly multiplied. But by far the greater number of these have perished; yet there is no difficulty in determining, that none of them had any just claim to a place in the Canon. By one or more of the rules laid down above, they can all be demonstrated to have been Apocryphal: and indeed most of them are never mentioned by any ancient author, in any other light than as spurious writings.* There is a famous decree of pope GELASIUS, in which, at least twenty-five of these books are named, and declared to be Apocryphal. It is not certain, indeed, whether this decree ought to be ascribed to GELASIUS, or to one of his predecessors, DAMASUS; but there can be no doubt that it is very ancient, and is by most supposed to have been formed, in the council which met at

* See Note D.

Rome, A. D. 494. A translation of this decree extracted from Jones, will be found in the notes at the end of the volume.

* See Note E.

SECTION XV.

APOCRYPHAL BOOKS WHICH ARE STILL EXTANT—LETTER OF ABGARUS KING OF EDESSA TO JESUS, AND HIS ANSWER—EPISTLE TO THE LAODICEANS—LETTERS OF PAUL TO SENECA—PROTEVANGELION OF JAMES—THE GOSPEL OF OUR SAVIOUR'S INFANCY—THE ACTS OF PILATE—THE ACTS OF PAUL AND THECLA.

We come now to consider those Apocryphal books which are still extant, and concerning which, therefore, we can speak more particularly.

The first of these, is THE LETTER OF ABGARUS, KING OF EDESSA, *addressed to Jesus, as sent by his footman Ananias.*

EUSEBIUS is the first who makes mention of this Epistle, and the sum of his account is, that our Saviour's miraculous works drew innumerable persons to him, from the most remote countries, to be healed of their diseases;—that ABGARUS, a famous King beyond the Euphrates, wrote to him, because he was afflicted with a malady, incurable by human art. Our Lord promised to send one of his disciples to him, and Thaddeus, one of the seventy disciples was sent by Thomas after the ascension of Jesus, by an intimation given him from hea-

ven. For the truth of this story, Eusebius appeals to the public records of the city of Edessa, where, he says, all the transactions of the reign of Abgarus are preserved in the Syriac language; out of which he translated these Epistles, and the accompanying history. He proceeds to relate, that Thaddeus having come to Edessa, wrought many miracles, and healed many that were diseased. Abgarus, supposing that this was the person whom Christ had, in his letter, promised to send to him, as soon as Thaddeus was introduced to him, perceiving something extraordinary in his countenance, fell down before him, at which his nobles were greatly surprised. The king having inquired, whether he was the person sent by Christ, he answered that on account of the faith of Christ he was sent, and assured him, that all things should be according to his faith. To which the king replied, that he believed so much in Christ, that he was resolved, had it not been for fear of the Romans, to have made war with the Jews for crucifying him. Thaddeus informed him of the ascension of Christ to his Father; the king replied, I believe in him, and in his Father also; on which the apostle said, I lay my hand on you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ; and the king was instantly cured of his disease. He also cured others who were diseased; and on the morrow, the king ordered all the city to meet together, to hear the apostle preach. The king offered him gold and silver, which he re-

fused, saying, *We have left our own, and should we take that which is another's?*

These Epistles are also mentioned by EPHREM, the Syrian, who was a deacon in the church of Edessa, in the latter end of the fourth century. His account of this matter, as given by Dr. Grabe, is as follows; "Blessed be your city, and mother Edessa, which was expressly blessed by the mouth of the Lord, and his disciples, but our apostles; for when Abgarus the king, who built that city, thought fit to send and acknowledge Christ, the Lord and Saviour of all, in his pilgrimage on earth; saying, I have heard all things which are done by you, and how much you have suffered by the Jews, who contemn you; wherefore, come hither, and take up your residence with me. I have a little city, which shall be equally yours and mine. Hereupon, the Lord admiring his faith, sent by messengers a blessing unto the city, which should abide for ever, till the Holy One be revealed from Heaven, even Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and God of God."

No other writer of the first four centuries, makes any explicit mention of this Epistle; but PROCOPIUS, in the sixth century, in his history of the Persian war, relates, "That Abgarus had been long afflicted with the gout, and finding no relief from the physicians, but hearing of the miracles of Christ, sent to him, and desired that he would come and live with him; and that upon his receiving

an answer from Christ, he was immediately cured; and that our Saviour in the end of his letter, gave Abgarus assurance, that his city should never be taken by enemies."

Evagrius, in the latter end of the sixth century, appeals to this account of Procopius, and confirms the story, that the city never should be taken by enemies, by a reference to some facts, particularly the failure of Chosroes, to take the city, when he laid siege to it. But this author adds a circumstance, which has much the air of a fable, that this failure of capturing the city was brought about by a picture of Christ's face, which he had impressed on a handkerchief, and sent to Abgarus, at his earnest request.

Cedrenus adds to all the rest, that Christ sealed his letter, with a seal consisting of seven Hebrew letters, the meaning of which was, *the divine miracle of God is seen.*

Among the moderns, a very large majority are of opinion, that this Epistle is Apocryphal. Indeed the principal advocates of its genuineness, are a few learned Englishmen, particularly, Dr. Parker, Dr. Cave, and Dr. Grabe, but they do not speak confidently on the subject; while on the other side, are found almost the whole body of learned critics, both Protestants and Romanists. Now, that this Epistle and history existed in the Archives of Edessa, in the time of Eusebius, there is no room to doubt, unless we would accuse

this respectable historian of the most deliberate falsehood ; for he asserts that he himself, had taken them thence. His words, however, must not be too strictly interpreted, as though he had himself been at Edessa, and had translated the Epistle from the Syriac ; for there is reason to believe, that he never visited that place, and that he was not acquainted with the Syriac tongue. The words will be sufficiently verified, if this document was translated and transmitted to him, through an authentic channel, from Edessa.

It is probable, therefore, that this story has some foundation in truth. Probably, Thaddeus, or some other apostle, did preach the gospel and perform miracles in that city ; but how much of the story is credible, it is not now easy to determine. But I think, it may be shown, that this Epistle was never penned by Jesus Christ, for the following reasons.

1. It is never mentioned, in the genuine gospels ; nor referred to by any writer of the first three centuries.

2. If this account had been true, there never could have been any hesitation, among the apostles, about preaching the gospel to the Gentiles.

3. It is unreasonable to believe, that if Christ had been applied to by this king for healing, he would have deferred a cure, until he could send an apostle, after his ascension. This does not cor-

respond with the usual conduct of the benevolent Saviour.

4. It seems to have been a tradition universally received, that Christ never wrote any thing himself; and if he had written this letter, it would have been more prized than any other portion of Scripture, and would have been placed in the Canon, and every where read in the churches.

5. After it was published by Eusebius, it never gained so much credit, as to be received as a genuine writing of Christ. As it was unknown in the first three centuries; so, in the fourth, when published, it was scarcely noticed by any writer.

6. The plain mention of our Lord's ascension, in the Epistle, is an evidence of its spuriousness: for in all his discourses, recorded by the Evangelists, there is no such explicit declaration of this event; and it cannot be supposed, that he would speak more explicitly to a Heathen king, than to the persons, chosen to be witnesses of his actions, and dispensers of his doctrine.

There is, however, nothing in the sentiments expressed in this Epistle, unsuitable to the humble and benevolent character of the Saviour; but learned men have supposed that there are several internal evidences of spuriousness, besides the one just mentioned. I conceive, however, that the reasons already assigned will be considered as sufficient to prove, that this Letter forms no part of the Sacred

Canon. It is excluded by several of the rules laid down, above; and even if it was genuine. it seems, that it ought rather to be received as a private communication, than as intended for the edification of the whole church. The history, which accompanies the letter, has several strong marks of spuriousness, but as this does not claim to be Canonical, we need not pursue the subject further. It may, however, not be amiss to remark, that the story of the picture of our Saviour impressed on a handkerchief and sent to Abgarus, is enough of itself to condemn the history as fabulous. This savours not of the simplicity of Christ; and has no parallel in any thing recorded in the Gospel.*

II. There is now extant, an Epistle, under the title of, PAUL TO THE LAODICEANS; and it is known, that as early as the beginning of the second century, a work existed under this name, which was received by MARCION, the heretic. But there is good reason for thinking, that the Epistle now extant, is an entirely different work, from the one which anciently existed; for the present Epistle does not contain the words, which Epiphanius has cited from that used by Marcion: and what renders this clear is, that the ancient Epistle was heretical, and was rejected by the Fathers of the church, with one consent; whereas, the Epistle which we now have, contains nothing erroneous;

* See Note F.

for it is a mere compilation from the other Epistles of Paul, with a few additional sentences, which contain no heretical doctrine.

As the Epistle is short, a translation of it will be given in the Notes, at the end of the volume.*

Concerning the ancient Epistle, under this title, Philastrius says, "That some were of opinion, that it was written by Luke; but because the heretics have inserted some (false) things, it is for that reason not read in the churches. Though it be read by some, yet there are no more than thirteen Epistles of Paul read to the people in the church, and sometimes, that to the Hebrews."

"There are some," says Jerome, "who read an Epistle, under the name of Paul, to the Laodiceans, but it is rejected by all."

And Epiphanius calls it, "An Epistle not written by the apostles."

The Epistle now extant, never having been received into the ancient catalogues, read in the churches, or cited as Scripture, is of course Apocryphal.

It is also proved not to be genuine, because it is almost entirely, an extract from the other Epistles of Paul.

III. Another writing which has been ascribed to Paul is, SIX LETTERS TO SENECA; with which are connected, Eight Letters from Seneca to Paul. These Letters are of undoubted antiquity; and

* See Note G.

several learned men of the Jesuits, have defended them as genuine; and allege, that they are similar to other Epistles received into the Canon, which were addressed to individuals. That such letters were in existence as early as the fourth century, appears from a passage in Jerome's Catalogue of Illustrious Men, where he gives the following account of Seneca; "Lucius Annæus Seneca, born at Corduba, a disciple of Sotio, a Stoic, uncle of Lucan the poet, was a person of very extraordinary temperance, whom I should not have ranked in my *Catalogue of Saints*, but that I was determined to it, by THE EPISTLES OF PAUL TO SENECA, and SENECA TO PAUL, which are read by many. In which, though he was at that time tutor to Nero, and made a very considerable figure, he saith, he wishes to be of the same repute among his countrymen, as Paul was among the Christians. He was slain by Nero, two years before Peter and Paul were honoured with martyrdom."

There is also a passage in Augustine's 54th Epistle, to Macedonius, which shows that he was not unacquainted with these Letters. His words are, "It is true, which Seneca, who lived in the times of the apostles, and *who wrote certain Epistles to Paul* which are now read, said, he who will hate those who are wicked, must hate all men."

There is no authentic evidence, that these Letters have been noticed by any of the rest of the Fathers. Indeed, it has been too hastily asserted

by several eminent critics, that Augustine believed that the Letters of Paul to Seneca were genuine; but the fact is, that he makes no mention, whatever, of Paul's Letters; he only mentions those of Seneca to Paul. The probability is, that he never saw them, for had he been acquainted with them, it is scarcely credible, that he would have said nothing respecting them, in this place.

Neither does Jerome say any thing from which it can with any certainty be inferred, that he received these Letters as genuine. He gives them the title by which they were known, and says, they were read by many; but if he had believed them to be genuine Letters of Paul, would he not have said much more? Would he not have claimed for them a place among Paul's Canonical Epistles? And what proves, that this Father did not believe them to be genuine is, that in this same book, he gives a full account of Paul and his writings, and yet does not make the least mention of these Letters to Seneca.

But the style of these Letters sufficiently demonstrates, that they are not genuine. Nothing can be more dissimilar to the style of Paul, and of Seneca, than that of these Epistles. The style of those attributed to Seneca, says Du Pin, is barbarous, and full of idioms that do not belong to the Latin tongue. "And those attributed to Paul" says Mr. Jeremiah Jones, "have not the least tinc-

ture of the gravity of the apostle, but are rather compliments than instructions."

The subscriptions to these Letters, are very different from those used by these writers in their genuine Epistles. Seneca is made to salute Paul by the name of *brother;* an appellation not in use among the Heathen, but peculiar to Christians.

By several of these Letters it would appear, that Paul was at Rome when they were written, but from others, the contrary may be inferred.

It seems strange, if they were both in the city, that they should date their Letters by consulships; and, indeed, this method of dating Letters, was wholly unknown among the Romans; and there are several mistakes in them, in regard to the consuls in authority, at the time.

Their trifling contents is also a strong argument of spuriousness. "They contain nothing," says Du Pin, "worthy either of Seneca or of Paul; scarcely one moral sentiment in the Letters of Seneca, nor any thing of Christianity in those of Paul."

What can be more unlike Paul than the Fifth Letter, which is occupied with a servile apology for putting his own name before Seneca's, in the inscription of his Letters, and declaring this to be contrary to Christianity?

These Letters, moreover, contain some things which are not true, as, "That the emperor Nero was delighted and surprised at the thoughts in

Paul's Epistles to the Churches:"—"And that Nero was both an admirer and favourer of Christianity." But very incongruous with this, and also with Paul's character, is that which he is made to say, in his Fourth Epistle, where he entreats Seneca to say no more to the Emperor respecting him or Christianity, lest he should offend him. Yet, in the Sixth Letter, he advises Seneca to take convenient opportunities of insinuating the Christian religion, and things favourable to it, to Nero and his family. But for further particulars, the reader is referred to the Epistles themselves, a translation of which, extracted from Jones, is inserted in the Notes.*

IV. There is extant a spurious gospel, entitled, The PROTEVANGELION OF JAMES, in the Greek language, which was brought from the East by POSTELL, who asserts, that it is held to be genuine by the Oriental churches, and is publicly read in their assemblies, with the other Scriptures. This learned man, moreover, undertakes the defence of this gospel, as the genuine production of the apostle James; and insists, that it ought at least, to have a place in the HAGIOGRAPHA. But his arguments are weak, and have been fully refuted by Fabricius and Jones.

This Apocryphal book, however, appears to be ancient; or at least, there was formerly a book un-

* See Note H.

der the same name, but that it is not Canonical, is easily proved. It is quoted by none of the ancient Fathers, except Epiphanius, who explicitly rejects it, as Apocryphal. It is found in none of the catalogues, and was never read in the primitive church. It contains many false and trifling stories; and in its style and composition, is a perfect contrast to the genuine gospels of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

From the Hebraisms with which it abounds, it has been supposed to be the work of some person, who was originally a Jew; but as it was anciently used by the Gnostics, there can be little doubt, that the author when he wrote, belonged to some one of the heretical sects, which so abounded in primitive times.

There is also another work, which has a near affinity with this, called, THE NATIVITY OF MARY. And although these books possess a similar character and contain many things in common; yet in other points they are contradictory to each other, as they both are, to the Evangelical history.

The internal evidence is itself sufficient to satisfy any candid reader of their Apocryphal character.*

V. The largest Apocryphal gospel extant, is en-

* Both these Apocryphal works, may be seen in the second volume of Jones' learned work on the Canon.

titled, THE GOSPEL OF OUR SAVIOUR'S INFANCY. There is also remaining a fragment of a gospel ascribed to Thomas, which probably was, originally, no other than the one just mentioned.

These gospels were never supposed to be Canonical by any Christian writer. They were forged and circulated by the Gnostics, and altered from time to time, according to their caprice.

The Gospel of our Saviour's Infancy, seems to have been known to Mohammed, or rather to his assistants; for according to his own account, in the Koran, he was unable to read. Many of the things related in the Koran, respecting Christianity, are from this Apocryphal work.

This Gospel is condemned by almost every rule laid down for the detection of spurious writings; and if all other evidence were wanting, the silly, trifling, and ludicrous stories, with which it is stuffed, would be enough to demonstrate, that it was spurious and Apocryphal. To give the curious reader an opportunity of contrasting these Apocryphal legends with the gravity and simplicity of the genuine gospels, I have inserted some of the miracles recorded in this book, at the end of the volume.*

It seems highly probable that this gospel of the Saviour's Infancy, and the book of the Nativity of Mary, were originally parts of the same work; an

* See Note I.

evidence of which is, that in the Koran, there is a continued and connected story, which is taken partly from the one, and partly from the other.* The same thing is proved by the fact, that Jerome, in one place, speaks of a preface which he had written to the gospel of our Saviour's Infancy, in which he condemns it, because it contradicts the gospel of John, and in anotner place, he uses the same words, and says they are in the preface to the Nativity of Mary.

Both these Apocryphal books have been formerly ascribed to LEUCIUS CHARINUS, who lived in the latter part of the third century, and who rendered himself famous, by forging spurious works, under the name of the apostles.

VI. There is another Apocryphal gospel entitled, THE GOSPEL OF NICODEMUS, or, THE ACTS OF PILATE, which was probably forged about the same time, as the one last treated of, and it is very likely, by the same person.

That it was the custom for the governors of provinces in the Roman Empire, to transmit to the emperors an account of all remarkable occurrences under their government, is capable of proof from the Roman history; and Eusebius expressly informs us, that this was customary; and Philo Judæus speaks, "Of the daily memoirs which were transmitted to Caligula, from Alexandria."

* See Koran, chap. iii.

That Pontius Pilate transmitted some account of the crucifixion of Christ, and of his wonderful works, is, therefore, in itself, highly probable; but it is rendered certain, by the public appeal made to these ACTS OF PILATE, both by JUSTIN MARTYR, and TERTULLIAN, in their Apologies: the one addressed to the Roman emperor, ANTONINUS PIUS; and the other, probably, to the Roman Senate. The words of Justin Martyr, are, "And of the truth of these facts you may be informed, out of the ACTS which were written by PONTIUS PILATE." And in the same Apology, he refers to these Acts for proof, "That our Saviour cured all sorts of diseases, and raised the dead."

TERTULLIAN, in two places of his APOLOGY, appeals to RECORDS WHICH WERE TRANSMITTED TO TIBERIUS, FROM JERUSALEM. His testimony is remarkable in both places, and deserves to be transcribed; "Tiberius," says he, "in whose time the Christian name became first known in the world, having received information from Palestine, in Syria, that Jesus Christ had there given manifest proof of the truth of his divinity, communicated it to the Senate, insisting upon it as his prerogative, that they should assent to his opinion in that matter; but the Senate not approving it, refused. Cæsar continued in the same opinion, threatening those who were accusers of the Christians."

In the other passage, after enumerating many of

the miracles of Christ, he adds, "All these things, Pilate himself, who was in his conscience for following Christ, transmitted to Tiberius Cæsar; and even the Cæsars themselves had been Christians, if it had been consistent with their secular interest." Both Eusebius and Jerome, cite this testimony of Tertullian, as authentic. It seems therefore certain, that some account of Christ and his actions was transmitted by Pilate to the emperor. "For," to use the words of an eminent man, "Tertullian, though a Christian writer, durst never have presumed to impose upon the Senate themselves, with such a remarkable story, if he was not able to prove it; and that he was, is evident from Justin Martyr, who often appeals to the Acts of Pilate, concerning the history of our Saviour—That Pilate did send such Acts is evident, for scarce any man, much less such a man as Justin Martyr, would have been so foolish, or so confident, as to affirm a thing in which it would be so easy to convict him of falsehood."*

And another, speaking of the same thing, says, "They were men of excellent learning and judgment; but no man who could write an Apology, can be supposed to have so little understanding, as to appeal to that account which Pilate sent to Tiberius, concerning the resurrection of Christ, in Apologies, dedicated to the Roman emperor himself,

* Dr. Parker.

and to the Senate, if no such account had ever been sent."*

It does not follow, however, that these Fathers had ever seen these Acts, or that they were ever seen by any Christian. During the reigns of Heathen emperors, Christians could have no access to the archives of the nation; but the fact of the existence of such a record, might have been, and probably was a matter of public notoriety; otherwise, we never can account for the confident appeal of these learned and respectable writers. There is no difficulty in conceiving how such a fact might have been certainly known to these Fathers, without supposing that they had seen the record. As the learned Casaubon says, "Some servants or officers of one of the Cæsars, who were converted to Christianity, and had opportunity of searching the public records at Rome, gave this account to some Christians, from whom Justin and Tertullian had it."

It may seem to be an objection to the existence of such Acts, that they were never made public, when the emperors became Christian; but it is altogether probable, that they were destroyed through the malice of the Senate, or of some Roman Emperor who was hostile to Christianity. They who took so much pains to destroy the writings of Christians, would not suffer such a monument of the truth of Christianity to remain, in their own palace.

* Dr. Jenkin.

But as to those Acts of Pilate which are now extant, no one supposes that they are genuine. They have every mark of being spurious. The external and internal evidence is equally against them; and it would be a waste of time to enter into any discussion of this point.

It may, however, be worth while to enquire into the motives which probably led some mistaken Christian, to forge such a narrative. And there seem to have been two; first, to have it in his power, to show the record, to which the Fathers had so confidently referred. The Heathen adversaries might say, after the destruction of the genuine Acts of Pilate, where is the document to which this appeal has been made, let it be produced. And some man thinking that he could serve the cause of Christianity, by forging Acts under the name of Pilate, was induced through a mistaken zeal, to write this narrative.

But there was another reason which probably had some influence on this fact. About the close of the third century, the Heathen had forged and published a writing, called THE ACTS OF PILATE, the object of which was, to render the Christians odious and contemptible to the public, by foul calumnies against their Founder and his apostles. Of this fact, EUSEBIUS gives us express and particular information; "From whence," says he, "the forgery of these is manifestly detected, who have lately published certain ACTS, against our Saviour. In

which, first, the very time which is assigned to them, discovers the imposture; for those things which they have impudently forged to have come to pass at our Saviour's crucifixion, are said to have occurred in the fourth consulship of Tiberius, which coincides with the seventh of his reign; at which time, it is certain, Pilate was not yet come into Judea; if any credit is due to Josephus, who expressly says, that Pilate was not constituted governor of Judea, until the twelfth year of Tiberius."*

And in another place, he says, "Seeing therefore that this writer, (Josephus) who was himself a Jew, has related such things in his history concerning John the Baptist and the Saviour, what can they possibly say for themselves, to prevent being convicted of the most impudent forgery, who wrote those things against John and Christ."

And in the ninth book of his Ecclesiastical History, this writer gives us information, still more particular, respecting this malicious forgery. "At length (the Heathen) having forged certain Acts of Pilate, concerning our Saviour, which were full of all sorts of blasphemy against Christ, they caused them, by the decree of Maximinus, to be dispersed through all parts of the empire; commanding by letters, that they should be published to all persons, in every place, both in cities and country places;

* Euseb. Ecc. Hist. Lib. I. c. 9, 11.

and that schoolmasters should put them into the hands of their children, and oblige them to learn them by heart, instead of their usual lessons."

Here it may be observed, that while this impudent forgery clearly shows with what malicious efforts the attempt was made to subvert the gospel, it proves at the same time, that there had existed a document under the name of, THE ACTS OF PILATE.

Now, the circulation of such an impious piece of blasphemy, probably instigated CHARINUS, or whoever was the author of these Acts, to counteract them by a work of another kind, under the same name.

How this book came to be called, THE GOSPEL OF NICODEMUS, will appear by the subscription annexed to it, in which it is said, "The emperor THEODOSIUS the great, found at Jerusalem, in the hall of Pontius Pilate, among the public records;—the things which were transacted in the nineteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar, emperor of the Romans—being a History written in Hebrew by Nicodemus, of what happened after our Saviour's crucifixion." And if this subscription be no part of the original work, still it may have occasioned this title; or, it may have originated in the fact, that much is said about Nicodemus, in the story which is here told.

But even if we had the original Acts of Pilate, or some History of Nicodemus, it needs no proof,

that they could have no just claim to a place in the Canon.

VII. The last Apocryphal book, which I shall mention, is that entitled THE ACTS OF PAUL AND THECLA.

There is no doubt, but that this book is Apocryphal. It was so considered by all the Fathers, who have mentioned it.

TERTULLIAN says, respecting it; "But if any read the Apocryphal books of Paul, and thence defend the right of women to teach and baptize, by the example of Thecla, let them consider, that a certain presbyter of Asia, who forged that book, under the name of Paul, being convicted of the forgery, confessed that he did it out of respect to Paul, and so left his place."*

And JEROME, in his life of Luke, says, "THE ACTS OF PAUL AND THECLA, with the whole story of the baptized lion, I reckon among the Apocryphal Scriptures."

And in the decree of pope Gelasius, it is asserted, "That the Acts of Thecla and Paul are Apocryphal."

It is manifest, however, that the primitive Christians gave credit to a story respecting Paul and Thecla, on which this book is founded; for it is often referred to, as a history well known, and commonly believed.

* Tertull. De Baptismo.

Thus, CYPRIAN, or some ancient writer under his name, says, "Help us, O Lord, as thou didst help the apostles, in their imprisonments, THECLA amidst the flames, Paul in his persecutions, and Peter amidst the waves of the sea."

And again, "Deliver me, O Lord, as thou didst deliver Thecla, when in the midst of the amphitheatre, she was in conflict with the wild beasts."

EUSEBIUS mentions a woman by this name, but he places her long after the apostle Paul, and she is therefore supposed to be another person.

EPIPHANIUS relates, "That when Thecla met Paul she determined against marriage, although she was then engaged to a very agreeable young man."*

AUGUSTINE refers to the same thing, and says, "By a discourse of Paul's, at Iconium, he incited Thecla to a resolution of perpetual virginity, although she was then actually engaged to be married."

Many others of the Fathers speak of THECLA, as of a person whose history was well known.

And among the moderns, Baronius, Locrinus, and Grabe, look upon this history as true and genuine, written in the apostolic age, and containing nothing superstitious, or unsuitable to that time. But none have ventured to assert, that these ACTS ought to have a place in the Canon.

* Epiph. Hær. lxviii.

No doubt, the book now extant, is greatly altered from that ancient history, referred to by the Fathers; and probably, the original story was founded on some tradition, which had a foundation in truth; but what the truth is, it is impossible now to discover among such a mass of fables, and ridiculous stories, as the book contains. As it now stands, it contains numerous things, which are false in fact; others, which are inconsistent with the Canonical Scriptures; and some, totally incompatible with the true character of Paul. Moreover it is favourable to several superstitious practices, which had no existence in the apostles' days; and finally, the forgery was acknowledged, as it relates to the ancient Acts; and those now existing, cannot be more genuine than the original; but to these many things have been added, of a silly and superstitious kind.

SECTION XVI.

NO PART OF THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION HANDED DOWN BY UNWRITTEN TRADITION.

In the former part of this work, it was seen, that it was not only necessary to show, that the Apocryphal writings had no right to a place in the Sacred Volume, but that there was no additional revelation which had been handed down, by oral tradition. The same necessity devolves upon us, in relation to the New Testament; for while it is pretty generally agreed, by all Christians, what books should be received into the Canon, there is a large Society which strenuously maintains, that besides the revelation contained in the divine record, written by the apostles and their assistants by the plenary inspiration of the Holy Spirit, there is a further ravelation, consisting of such things as were received from the mouth of Christ himself while upon earth, or taught to the churches by his inspired apostles, which were not by them, nor in their time, committed to writing, but which have come down to us by unbroken tradition.

The importance of this inquiry, is exceedingly manifest; for if, in addition to the written word,

there are important doctrines, and necessary sacraments of the church, which have come down by tradition; it would be a perilous thing for us to remain ignorant of those things, which God has enjoined, or to deprive ourselves of the benefits to be derived from those means of grace which he has instituted for the edification and salvation of the church. But, seeing traditions are much more liable to alteration and corruption than written documents, it is very necessary that we should be on our guard against imposition; and if it is a duty to exercise much care and diligence, in distinguishing between inspired books and such as are spurious, it cannot be less incumbent, to ascertain first, whether any part of God's revealed will has been handed down by tradition only; and next, to learn accurately, what those things are, which have been thus communicated. And as there are Apocryphal books which claim a place in the Canon; so, doubtless there would be Apocryphal traditions, if any truths had been conveyed to the church, through this channel. But if there be no satisfactory evidence of any such revelation having come down to us; nor any possibility of ascertaining what proceeded from the apostles, and what from the fancy and superstition of men, then we are right in refusing the high claims of tradition, and adhering inflexibly to the written word, *which is able*, through faith, *to make us wise unto salvation*.

This doctrine of traditions, is most convenient and favourable to the church of Rome, in all her controversies with Protestants and others; for whatever she may assert, as an article of faith, or teach as a part of Christian duty, although there be no vestige of it in the word of God, may readily be established by tradition. For as the church alone has the keeping of this body of oral law, she only is the proper judge of what it contains, and indeed can make it to suit herself. If we should concede to the Romanists what they claim, on this point, the controversy with them, might well be brought to an end; and all we should have to do, would be, to yield implicit faith to whatever they might please to teach us. And even if we should be required to believe and practise, in direct opposition to the plain declarations of Holy Scripture; yet, as the true interpretation of Scripture, on this plan, is only in the hands of the infallible head of the church, and is indeed understood by means of unwritten traditions, we must not trust to our own understanding in the most evident matters, nor even to our own senses, although several of them should concur in giving us notice of some fact. Now, before we give ourselves up to be led blindly in such a way as this, it behoves us, diligently and impartially, to inquire, whether God has required of us, this implicit submission to men. We ought to be assured, that their authority over our faith and conscience, has a divine warrant for its

exercise; and especially, we should be satisfied, on sufficient grounds, that these unwritten traditions, on which the whole fabric rests, are truly the commands of God; for if they are not, we have the highest authority for rejecting them. And if their claim to a divine origin cannot be made out clearly, they cannot, in reason, bind us to obedience; for, when God gives a law, he promulgates it with sufficient clearness, that all whom it concerns, may know what is required of them.

To exhibit fairly, the true point of controversy on this subject, it will be requisite to make several preliminary observations, that it may be clearly understood what we admit, and what we deny.

1. In the first place, then, it is readily admitted, that a law revealed from Heaven and communicated to us, *orally*, with clear evidence of its origin, is as binding, as if written ever so often. When God uttered the ten commandments, on Mount Sinai, in the midst of thunderings and lightnings, it surely was as obligatory on the hearers, as after He had written them on tables of stone.

It is a dictate of common sense, that it is a matter of indifference, how a divine revelation is communicated, provided it come to us properly authenticated.

2. Again, it is conceded, that for a long time, there was no other method of transmitting the re-

velations received from Heaven, from generation to generation, but by oral tradition, and such external memorials, as aided in keeping up the remembrance of important transactions. As far as appears, books were unknown, and letters not in use, until a considerable time after the flood. During the long period which preceded the time of Moses, all revelations must have been handed down by tradition. But, while this concession is willingly made, it ought, in connexion, to be remarked, that this mode was then used, because no other existed ; and that, in the early ages of the world, the longevity of the patriarchs, rendered *that* a comparatively safe channel of communication, which would now be most uncertain ; and notwithstanding this advantage, the fact was, that in every instance, as far as we are informed, in which divine truth was committed to tradition, it was utterly lost; or soon became so corrupted by foreign mixtures, that it was impossible to ascertain what part of the mass contained a revelation from God. It is therefore the plausible opinion of some, that writing was revealed from heaven, for the very purpose of avoiding the evil which had been experienced, and that there might be a certain vehicle for all divine communications: and it is certain, that all that we know of the history of alphabetical writing, leads us to connect its origin with the commencement of WRITTEN REVELATIONS.

It is therefore not an improbable supposition, that

God taught letters to Moses, for the express purpose of conveying, by this means, his laws, to distant ages, without alteration; and it deserves to be well considered, that after the command was given to Moses, to write in a book the laws and statutes delivered to him, nothing was left to oral tradition, as has been shown in the former part of this work.

3. It will be granted also, that tradition, especially when connected with external memorials, is sufficient to transmit, through a long lapse of time, the knowledge of particular events, or of transactions of a very simple nature.

Thus, it may be admitted, that if the gospels had not come down to us, we might by tradition be assured, that Christ instituted the Eucharist, as a memorial of his death; for, from the time of its institution, it has, in every successive age, and in many countries, been celebrated to perpetuate the remembrance of that event. And it is not credible, that such a tradition should be uniform, at all times, and every where, and be connected with the same external rite, if it was not founded in fact. Besides, the thing handed down, in this instance, is so simple in its nature, that there was no room for mistake.

There is one fact, for the truth of which, we depend entirely on tradition, so far as external testimony is concerned, and that is the truth which in this work we have been attempting to establish, that the books of the New Testament were writ-

ten by the persons under whose names they have come down to us. This fact is incapable of being proved from the Scriptures, because we must first be assured that they contain the testimony of inspired men, before we can prove any thing by them. The point to be established here, is, that the apostles wrote these books. If it were ever so often asserted in a book, that a certain person was its author, this would not be satisfactory evidence of its genuineness, because any impostor can write what falsehoods he pleases in a book, and may ascribe it to whom he will; as in fact, many have written spurious works, and ascribed them to the apostles. We must therefore have the testimony of those who had the opportunity of judging of the fact, given either explicitly, or implicitly. In most cases, where a book is published under the name of some certain author, in the country in which he lived and was known, a general, silent acquiescence in the fact, by the people of that age and country, with the consent of all that came after them, may be considered as satisfactory evidence of the genuineness of such book. But where much depends on the certainty of the fact in question, it is necessary to have positive testimony; and in order that it be satisfactory, it should be universal, and uncontradicted. When, therefore, a certain volume is expressly received as the work of certain individuals, by all who lived at or near the time when it was published, and all

succeeding writings concur in ascribing it to the same persons, and not a solitary voice is raised in contradiction, the evidence of its genuineness, seems to be as complete as the nature of the case admits. Just such is the evidence of the genuineness of the books of the New Testament; or, at least, of most of them. It is, however, the evidence of tradition; but of such a tradition, as is abundantly sufficient to establish a fact of this sort. The thing attested is most simple in its nature, and not liable to be misunderstood. This necessity of tradition to establish the authenticity of the books of the New Testament, has been made a great handle of, by the Romanists, in the defence of their favourite doctrine. They pretend, that the point which we have here conceded, is all that is necessary to establish their whole system, on the firmest foundation. They argue, that if we must receive the Scriptures themselves, by tradition, much more other things. Indeed, they ascribe all the authority which the Scriptures possess, to the testimony of the church, without which, they assert, that they would deserve no more credit than any other writings. But, because a single fact, incapable of proof in any other way, must be received by tradition, it does not follow, that numerous other matters which might easily have been recorded, must be learned in the same manner. Because a document requires oral testimony to establish its authenticity, it is not

therefore necessary to prove the truth of the matters contained in that record, by the same means. The very purpose of written records, is, to prevent the necessity of trusting to the uncertainty of tradition ; and as to the allegation, that the Scriptures owe their authority to the church, it amounts to no more than this, which we freely admit, that it is by the testimony of the early Fathers, that we are assured that these writings are the productions of the apostles ; and it is true, that most of those witnesses who have given testimony, were members of the Catholic church. But our confidence in their testimony, on this point, is not because they were members of the church, but because they lived in times and circumstances, favourable to an accurate knowledge of the fact which they report. And accordingly, we admit the testimony of those who were out of the church; yea, of its bitterest enemies, to the same fact, and on some accounts, judge it to be the most unexceptionable. While we weigh this evidence, it would be absurd to make its validity depend on the witnesses being members of the church ; for that would be to determine, that the church was divine and infallible, before we had ascertained that the Scriptures were the word of God. Surely, if on examination, it had turned out, that the Scriptures were not inspired, the authority of the Christian church would have been worth nothing: and therefore, previously to the decision on this

point, we cannot defer any thing to the authority of the church. The truth is, that the witnesses being of the church, is, in this inquiry, merely an incidental circumstance. A sufficient number of competent and credible witnesses, not of the church, would establish the fact just as well as those who have given testimony; and, as was before observed, such testimony, on the score of freedom from all partiality, has the advantage. The testimony of Jews and Heathen, has, on this account, been demanded by infidels, and has been sought for with avidity by the defenders of Christianity, and in the view of all considerate men, is of great weight. But it is not just to ascribe the authority of these books to the church, because the greater number of the witnesses of their apostolical origin, were members of the church. The law enacted by the Supreme Legislature of the State, does not owe its authority to the men who attest its genuineness. It is true, it would not be known certainly to be a law, without the attestation, but it would be absurd to ascribe the authority of the law to the persons whose testimony proved that it was really a law of the State. The cases are exactly parallel. The Scriptures cannot owe their authority to the church, for without them, the church can have no authority; and although she may, and does give ample testimony in favour of their divine origin, this confers no authority on them; it only proves to us, that they have

authority, which is derived from the spirit of God, by whom they were indited. It is truly wonderful, how this plain case has been perplexed and darkened, by the artifice and sophistry of the writers of the church of Rome.

But if it be insisted, that if we admit tradition as sufficient evidence of a fact in one case, we ought to do so in every other, where the tradition is as clear. We answer, that to this we have no objection, provided this species of proof be as necessary, and as clear in the one case as the other. Let any other fact be shown to be as fully attested, as the genuineness of the books of the New Testament, and to need this kind of proof as much, and we will not hesitate to receive it as true, whatever may be the consequence. But the very fact which we have been considering, seems to raise a strong presumption against the necessity of depending on tradition for any thing else. Why were these books written? Was it not to convey to us, and to all future ages, the revelations of God to man? Because it is necessary to authenticate, by testimony, this record, must we depend on the same testimony for information on the points of which the record treats? Surely not. For the proof of these we have nothing to do, but refer to the document itself: otherwise, the possession of written records would be useless. If, indeed, a doubt should arise about the meaning of something in the record, it would not be unreason-

able to inquire, how it had been understood and practised on, by those who received it at first; but if we should find a society acting in direct opposition to a written charter, on which their existence depended, and pretending to prove that they were right, by appealing from the written documents to vague traditions, all sensible men, not interested, would judge that the case was a very suspicious one.

4. We are, moreover, ready to acknowledge, that the gospel was, at first, for several years, communicated orally, by the apostles and their assistants. The churches when first planted, had no written gospels; they received the same truths, now contained in the Gospels and Epistles, by the preaching of the apostles and others; and doubtless were as well instructed as those churches which have had possession of the whole inspired volume. And what they had thus received, without book, they could communicate to others; and thus, if the Gospels and Epistles had never been written, the Christian religion might have been transmitted from generation to generation. Then it may be asked, why the writing of these books should hinder the transmission of many things which might not be coutained in them, to future generations? for it cannot be doubted that many things were said and done by Christ, which were not recorded in the gospels: and there is reason to think, that the apostles were much fuller in their sermons, than in their writings; and that they established many

rules for the good order and government of the church, of which, we have in their Epistles, either no account, or only brief hints; which though they might be readily understood by those who had received their verbal instructions, are insufficient, without tradition, to teach us what rules and institutions were established in the churches, by apostolical authority. Now if these were transmitted by tradition, to the next generation, and by them to the following, and so on, in an uninterupted series untill the present time, are we not as much bound to receive such traditions, and be governed by them, as by the written word?

I have now presented the argument in favour of traditions, in the strongest light, in which I am able to place it; and it would be uncandid not to admit, that it wears at first sight a face of plausibility; and if the whole case as here stated, could be made out with satisfactory evidence, I think we should be constrained to receive, to some extent, this oral law of the Romish church. But before any man can reasonably be required to rest his faith on tradition, he has a right to be satisfied on several important points; as, whether it was the purpose of God to permit any part of the revelation intended for the use of the church, in all future ages, to be handed down by traditon. For, as he directed every thing in the law given at Mount Sinai, intended to regulate the faith and practice of the Israelites; to be committed to writing, by Mo-

ses, it is no how improbable that the same plan was pursued, in regard to the writings of the New Covenant; especially, when it is considered, how much superior written communications are to verbal, as it respects accuracy. When a channel for conveying the truth had been provided, calculated to preserve all communications from corruption; and when it is acknowledged, that this was used for a part of the matter to be transmitted, how can it be accounted for, that another part should be committed to the uncertainty of oral tradition? Why not commit the whole to writing?

But it is incumbent on the advocates of tradition to show by undoubted proofs, that what they say has come down by tradition, was really received from the mouth of Christ, or from the teaching of his apostles. As they wish to claim for this rule an authority fully equal to that which is given to the Scriptures, they ought to be able to produce *the very words*, in which these instructions were given. But this they do not pretend to do. It may be said, indeed, that words and sentences, in their just order and connexion, cannot be conveyed by tradition, and therefore this demand is unreasonable. I answer, that this allegation is most true, but instead of making in favour of traditions, it is a strong argument to prove, that nothing thus received, can be of equal certainty and authority with the written word. When an article of faith

is proposed, which is contained in the Scriptures, we can turn to the sacred text, and read the words of Christ and his apostles; and may be assured, that they express the truth contained in said article; but if an article of faith be asserted to have come down by tradition, we have no opportunity of knowing the words in which it was expressed: for, while it is pretended that the doctrine or instruction has reached us, the words have been lost; for what advocate of traditions is able, in any single case, to furnish us with the words of any divine revelation, which is not contained in the Sacred Scriptures?

But it is essential to the credit of traditions, that it be proved clearly, that those articles of religion, or institutions of worship, said to be received from this source, have indeed been handed down without alteration or corruption, from Christ and his apostles. It is not sufficient, that they have been long received and have now the sanction of the belief and practice of the whole Catholic church; it ought to be shown, that they have always, from the very days of the apostles, been received with universal consent. We know that the church has undergone many vicissitudes; that she has sometimes been almost extirpated by the sword of persecution; has been overrun with dangerous errors; has been overwhelmed with the darkness of Gothic ignorance; and we believe, has greatly apostatized from purity of doctrine and worship; and this accords

with the prophecy of Paul, who clearly intimates, that a time would come, when there should be a *falling away*. Now it may have happened, that during this long period of adversity, heresy, darkness, and corruption, many things may have crept in, and may have obtained an extensive and firm footing, which were totally unknown in the days of the apostles, or in the primitive church; and that this has in fact occurred, we are not left to conjecture. It is a matter of historical record, which cannot be disputed, and which is not denied, even by the Romanists themselves. Who that is not insane with prejudice, could persuade himself, that all the opinions, rites and ceremonies, which now exist in the Romish church, were prevalent in the times of the apostles, and were received from them by tradition?

Besides, there is a multitude of other things received and held to be important, by the church of Rome, of which there is no vestige in the Scriptures, and concerning which there is no early tradition. Many rules and ceremonies which have been long in use, can be traced to their commencement, at a period much later than that of the apostles. Now amidst such a mass of traditions, how can it be ascertained which have come down from Christ and his apostles? Perhaps we shall be told, that the infallible head of the church can determine,

2 Thes. ii. 3.

with certainty, what we ought to believe and practise; but if there be on earth an infallible judge, we have no need of traditions. All that is necessary, is, for this person to establish his claim to infallibility, and then all will be as much bound to receive his decisions, as if they were expressly written in the Holy Scriptures. On this ground the controversy between the Romanists and Protestants, first commenced. The defenders of the old system appealed to the authority of the Pope, and the infallibility of the church, but as it was impossible to sustain themselves by Scripture, on these points, they found it very convenient to have recourse to the doctrine of unwritten traditions, which they pretended had been handed down from Christ and his Apostles. Grant them this, and there is no doctrine, however absurd, which may not be supported. Grant them this, and it will be in vain to appeal any more to the Sacred Scriptures, as a standard of truth; for this traditionary law not only inculcates what is not found in the Scriptures, but teaches the only true interpretation of Scripture. Traditions may, therefore, be considered as the bulwark of the Romish church. Concede to them, the ground which they assume, and the whole body of their ceremonial laws, and unscriptural practices, are safe. For as they can feign what traditions they please, having the keeping of them entirely in their own hands, they are prepared to defend every part of their system: but take this away

from them, and their defence is gone. Bring them to the ground of clear Scriptural testimonies, and they are weak; for it is manifest, that the Bible knows nothing of their monstrous accumulation of superstitious rites.

The Council of Trent, therefore, early in their sessions, made a decree on this subject, in which, after recognising the Scriptures, they add.—"*Nec non traditiones ipsas, tum ad fidem, tum ad mores pertinentes, tanquam vel oretenus a Christo, vel a spiritu sancto, dictatus et continua successione in Ecclesia Catholica conservatas, pari pietatis affectu et reverentia suscipit ac veneratur.*" The meaning of which is, that The Holy Synod receives and venerates traditions relating both to faith and manners, as proceeding from the mouth of Christ himself, or as dictated by the Holy Spirit, and preserved in an uninterrupted succession in the Catholic church, with equal affection and reverence, as the written Scriptures! This was the first decree of the fourth Session of this famous Council.

Before leaving this subject, it will be proper to consider some of the other arguments, which the Romanists bring forward in support of their beloved traditions.

And the first is imposing, as it is derived from the express declarations of Scripture, in which we are exhorted to obey traditions. *Now we command you brethren, in the name of our Lord*

Jesus that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. Here Paul makes express mention of traditon. And in the preceding chapter, *Therefore brethren stand fast and hold the* TRADITIONS *which ye have been taught whether by word, or our Epistle.* Now all that is necessary to refute the argument derived from these and such like passages, where the word *tradition* is used, is to observe, that Paul employs this word in a very extensive sense, to signify whatever doctrines or institutions he had *delivered* to the churches, whether by his preaching or writing. And in the verse first cited, he evidently refers to what he had said to them in his First Epistle, for the words following are, *For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us; for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; neither did we eat any man's bread for nought,* &c. Now this tradition which he commanded the Thessalonians to obey, was contained in the former Epistle addressed to them, where it is said, *And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you.* And in the quotation from the 2d chapter, it is clear, that by *traditions,* the apostle did not mean merely oral communications, for he explains himself, by saying, *whether by word or our Epistle.* It is not

2 Thes. iii. 6, 7, 11, 15. 1 Thes. iv. 11.

denied, that Paul delivered many things orally to the churches, as has been already acknowledged; all the instructions given to the churches, first planted, were oral, for as yet no Gospels nor Epistles were written; but the true point in dispute, is, whether any article of faith, or any important institution, thus originally communicated, was omitted, when the books of the New Testament were written, by divine inspiration? Whether, while a part of the revelation of God, for the use of his church, was committed to writing, another important part was left to be handed down by tradition? That the word *tradition*, as used by Paul, makes nothing in favour of the doctrine of the Romish church, is evident, because by this word he commonly means such things as were distinctly recorded in the Scriptures. Thus in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, he says, *For I delivered unto you first of all*, where the word for transmitting by tradition, is used; but what were those things which he had by tradition communicated to them? He informs us in the next words, *How that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures.*

It is manifest, therefore, that the argument derived from the exhortation of Paul to obey tradition, is but a shadow, and vanishes upon the slightest touch of fair examination.

1 Cor. xv. 3, 4.

2. Their next, and principal argument, is derived from the frequent declarations of the early Fathers, in favour of tradition. Cyprian refers those who might be in doubt respecting any doctrine, to the *holy tradition*, received from Christ and his apostles: and Irenæus, as cited by Eusebius, says, "That those things which he heard Polycarp relate concerning Christ, his virtues and his doctrines, which he had learned from converse with the apostles, he had inscribed on his heart, and not on paper." But after a few sentences, he informs us, "That all which he had heard from them was in accordance with the Scriptures, (πάντα σύμφωνα ταῖς γραφαῖς.) This sentence of Irenæus is of great importance, for it teaches us how the Fathers understood this subject. They received such traditions as came down through pious men from the apostles, but they compared them with the Scriptures: even then the Scriptures were the standard by which all traditions must be judged. Irenæus insinuates, plainly enough, that if what he had heard from Polycarp, had not been in accordance with the Scriptures, he would not have considered it as deserving attention

But the same Irenæus, and Tertullian, have spoken, in still stronger terms, in favour of tradition, in their controversies with heretics. The former, in the third chapter, of the third book of his work, on Heresies, says; "The tra-

dition of the apostles is manifest, in the whole world. In the church it is exposed to the view of all, who are willing to know the truth." And in the fourth chapter, "It is not necessary to seek the truth from others, which can easily be acquired from the church, since the blessed apostles have deposited in her, most fully, all those truths which are needful, so that every one who will, may drink of the water of life. This is the true door of life, and all others are thieves and robbers; them we should avoid: but those things which appertain to the church, we should delight in with great diligence, and should lay hold of the *tradition of truth*. For what if the apostles had left us no writings, ought we not to follow the order of *traditions*, which they, to whom the churches were committed, have delivered to us? To which institution, many barbarous nations have submitted, having neither letters nor ink, but having the *tradition* of the apostles, inscribed on their hearts; which also they follow."

And Tertullian, in his work, concerning PRESCRIPTIONS, says, "If Christ commissioned certain persons to preach his gospel, then certainly none should be received as preachers, except those appointed to office by him. And as they preached what Christ revealed unto them, what they taught can only be known, by applying to the churches, which the apostles planted, by preaching to them, whether *viva voce*, or by their Epis-

ties. Therefore, all doctrine which agrees with that held by the apostolical churches, is to be considered as true, and held fast, because the churches received it from the apostles, the apostles from Christ, and Christ from God; but all other doctrine which is repugnant to that received by the churches, should be rejected as false, as being repugnant to that truth taught by the apostles, by Christ, and by God."

These declarations, from such men, in favour of tradition, seem at first view, to be altogether favourable to the doctrine of the church of Rome; but we despair not of being able to convince the candid reader, that when the occasion on which these things were said, and the character and opinions of the persons against whom these Fathers wrote, are considered, their testimony, instead of making against the sufficiency of the Scriptures, will be found corroborative of the opinion which we maintain. They do not appeal to tradition, let it be observed, for confirmation of articles of faith, not contained in the Scriptures; but the doctrines which they are defending, are among the most fundamental, contained in the New Testament. They are precisely the doctrines which are comprehended in the Apostles' Creed. Now, to appeal to tradition for the confirmation of such doctrines as these, never can be of any force to prove, that other doctrines, not contained in the Scriptures, may be established by tradition.

But it may be asked, if those doctrines concerning which they disputed, are plainly inculcated in the New Testament, why have recourse to tradition? Why not appeal, at once, to the Scriptures? To which I would answer, that Irenæus does little else, in the third, fourth, and fifth books of his work, than confirm the truth by a copious citation of Scripture. Nothing can be more manifest, therefore, than that the matters in dispute were not such as could only be proved by tradition, but they were such truths as lie at the very foundation of the Christian religion, and to record which, the Gospels and Epistles were written. But still the question returns, why did these Fathers appeal for proof to tradition, when they had testimony so full and decisive from the Scriptures? The answer to this question will show us, in the clearest manner, that the views of Irenæus and Tertullian, relative to the Scriptures and to traditions, were such as are now held by Protestants, and that the heretics whom they opposed, occupied nearly the same ground as the Romanists now do, in this controversy. These heretics, either rejected the Scriptures as being an insufficient rule, and asserted that they were not competent for the decision of such matters; or they so corrupted them, that it was useless to appeal to them for proof: for testimonies derived from the genuine Scriptures, they would not admit. This is not conjecture; for Irenæus has explicitly

stated the case. "When," says he, "they are confuted from the Scriptures themselves, they allege, that they are not correct, or not of authority, and assert that they speak so variously, that the truth cannot be established by them, without *tradition;* for say they it was handed down, not by letters, but *viva voce.*" And Tertullian says, "This heresy does not receive some parts of the Scriptures; and what they do receive is so corrupted by additions, or detractions, to suit their own doctrine, that they cannot be said to receive the Scriptures entire, &c." Again; "They pretend that the apostles did not wish to reveal all things plainly, for while they made known certain truths to all, there were others, which they communicated secretly, and to a few persons, which they say, the apostle Paul meant, by the *depositum.*"

From these quotations, the reason why these Fathers had recourse to traditions, is most manifest. It was the only ground on which these heretics could be met; for they denied, (as the Romanists now do,) that the Scriptures were a certain and sufficient standard of truth. They said, that their meaning could not be ascertained without tradition; that they were defective; and also, that there were some parts which they did not acknowledge; and they held moreover, that some things

1 Tim. vi. 20.

were never committed to writing, but designedly handed down by tradition. We did not, indeed, expect to find the exact doctrine of the Romanists, respecting the Scriptures and tradition, at so early a period of the church; but unfortunately for their cause, the persons who are found agreeing with them, are gross heretics.

It is now easy to see, why the appeal was made by the Fathers, to universal tradition; and they show, that in their day, tradition and Scripture were harmonious; and that if the apostles had written nothing, the consent of all the churches would be sufficient to prove, that the doctrines which they defended, were received from the apostles. Instead, therefore, of using tradition, as the Romanists do, to prove some doctrine not contained in the Scripture, they used it merely to confirm the truths whic hare manifestly contained in the New Testament. They were at no loss for Scripture testimonies to establish these truths, but they were disputing with men who did not admit the authority of the Scriptures to be decisive, and therefore they appeal to universal tradition, in support of them It is said, indeed, by Irenæus, that many barbarous nations had received the faith, among whom letters and writing were unknown. They must, therefore, it is concluded, have received it from tradition. Very good. Just as heathen tribes now receive, from those missionaries who preach the gospel to them, a short

summary of the most important doctrines of the New Testament. The truths which these barbarous nations received, were not different from those contained in the Sacred Scriptures, but the very same, taught in a short comprehensive creed. In fact, we have here, the true origin of that symbol of doctrine, commonly called, The Apostles' Creed, which was a summary of Christianity, used in very early times, in the instruction of those who were not able to read the New Testament, or who had no access to it. That Irenæus actually referred, in the passage alluded to, to these elementary doctrines, he explicitly informs us; for, immediately after mentioning these barbarous nations, who were destitute of "letters and ink," he adds, "Believing in one God, the maker of heaven and earth, and all things which are therein; and in Jesus Christ the Son of God, who for his exceeding great love to his creatures, submitted to be born of a virgin, by himself uniting man to God; and having suffered under Pontius Pilate, and having risen again, was received into heaven; about to come again in glory; the Saviour of those who are saved, and the judge of those who are judged; and will send into eternal fire, the perverters of the truth, and the despisers of his Father, and of his coming; which barbarians, if any one should announce to them the doctrines invented by heretics, stopping their ears, they would fly far away from them. Thus, the ancient apos-

tolical tradition does not sanction those monstrous opinions inculcated by heretics."

In the second chapter, of the first book, of the same work, Irenæus describes the apostolical doctrine, thus: "The church," says he, "planted by the apostles and their disciples throughout the whole world, even to the ends of the earth, receives the same faith; which is, In one God Almighty, the Father, who made Heaven and earth, the sea and all things which are therein; in one Jesus Christ, the Son of God, incarnate for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who by the prophets, predicted the good-will of God; his advent; his generation of a virgin; his passion, and resurrection from the dead; and the ascension in the flesh of our beloved Lord Christ Jesus; and his coming again from Heaven, in the glory of his Father, as our Lord Jesus Christ; our God, Saviour, and King; before whom, according to the good pleasure of the Father invisible, every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue shall confess the justice of his judgments towards all, when he will send wicked spirits, fallen and apostate angels, and blaspheming men, into eternal fire; but the just and upright who have kept his precepts, and persevered in his love, some indeed from the beginning, and others as having received the gift of repentance, he will surround with eternal glory. This faith, the church

spread over the whole world, diligently keeps, as if she inhabited one house, and believes in it, as if possessing but one soul and one heart; and in accordance with the same, she teaches and preaches, as with one mouth. Although the languages which are in the world are different, yet there is one and the same TRADITION. Neither do the churches which are founded in Germany, believe differently, from those in Italy, nor from those among the Celts, nor from those in the East, nor from those which are in Egypt, or in Lybia, or in the middle of the world. But as the Sun is one and the same through the whole world, so the light and preaching of the truth, every where shines, and illuminates all men, who are willing to come to the knowledge of the truth, &c."

This then is the apostolical tradition, of which these Fathers speak so magnificently. Not any secret doctrine never committed to writing; not any articles of faith, or rites of worship, of which no vestige can be found in the Bible; but the plain, prominent, fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion: the very doctrines contained in the Apostles' Creed. That the preaching of the gospel preceded the circulation of the Scriptures, we admit, but this preaching we insist. and have proved, contained nothing different from that which is written in the Gospels and Epistles.

Tertullian speaks to the same purpose, and

furnishes us with another summary of the common faith of primitive Christians; "The rule of faith," says he, "is that by which it is believed, that there is no more than one God, and no other beside the Creator of the world, who produced all things out of nothing by his Word, first of all sent forth, which Word, is called his Son; was seen under different forms by the Patriarchs; was always heard by the prophets; and finally, by the Spirit and Power of God, being conceived by the Virgin Mary, became flesh in her womb. Jesus Christ having thus become man, published a new law, and a new promise of the kingdom of heaven; was crucified; rose again the third day; was caught up into heaven; sat down on the right hand of God the Father; sent as his substitute, the Power of the Holy Spirit, to influence those who believe; will come again in glory to take his Saints to the fruition of eternal life, and of the celestial promises; and to adjudge the profane to eternal fire; at which time there will be a resuscitation of both parts, and the flesh will be restored. This rule of faith was instituted by Christ, and is questioned by none but heretics, and such as teach those things which make heretics."*

These are the apostolical traditions, which were universally received; the very plainest, and most

* Tertull. De Præscriptionibus.

fundamental articles of the Christian Religion, which are written amply in every gospel, and recognized fully, in every Epistle. Thus far then, it does not appear that any thing was left to unwritten tradition, to be communicated to future ages; for those very truths which were at first delivered orally by the apostles, were afterwards recorded by inspiration; and when the preachers of the gospel instructed the ignorant who were unacquainted with letters, they taught them, precisely, but in a summary way, what is written in the New Testament.

3. Another argument depended on by the advocates of tradition, is derived from the fact, that there are some doctrines, not expressly mentioned in Scripture, which are universally inculcated by the Fathers, which all true Christians have received as articles of faith in all succeeding ages, and which are not denied even by Protestants themselves. To this class, belong, the doctrine of the Trinity, the doctrine of the Son being of the same substance as the Father, the deity of the Holy Spirit, his proceeding from the Father and the Son, the two natures in Christ constituting one person, the baptism of infants, the religious observance of the Lord's day, &c. Now, in regard to these articles of religion, we observe, that although they are not contained in Scripture, in so many words, they may be derived from Scripture, by legitimate inference; and conclusions fairly deduced

from the declarations of the word of God, are as truly parts of divine revelation, as if they were expressly taught in the Sacred volume. All the articles mentioned above, are capable of satisfactory proof from Scripture; and if we did not find them taught there, we should feel under no obligation to receive them. We do not deny, however, that the universal consent, and uniform practice of the primitive church, ought to have great weight in confirming our faith in important doctrines, and in satisfying us that certain things not explicitly mentioned in Scripture, were practised by the apostles. Although the doctrine of the Trinity, and the essential deity of the Son and Holy Spirit, are doctrines very plainly taught in the New Testament, yet in a matter of such vast importance, it cannot but afford satisfaction to every sincere inquirer to find, that these doctrines were universally believed by the Fathers to be taught in the writings of the apostles.

And, although, there are principles and facts recorded in the New Testament, from which it can be fairly concluded, that the first day of the week was set apart for public worship, and that the infants of believers were, from the beginning, baptized, and thus connected with the visible church; yet, as these institutions are not so expressly included in Scripture, as to remove all uncertainty, the fact of their universal observance,

in the primitive church, has, deservedly, great influence in convincing us, that our reasonings and inferences from Scriptural principles, are correct. But why should we be required to receive these things merely on the authority of tradition, when the Fathers themselves, appealed for their truth to the infallible rule contained in the New Testament? Thus, on the subject of infant baptism, which the Romanists pretend is derived solely from tradition, we find the Fathers appealing not only to universal practice and apostolical tradition, but frequently to the words of Scripture, in which they believed, that the practice was implicitly authorized. Irenæus, Origen, Augustine, Cyprian, Ambrose, and Chrysostom, do all appeal to Scripture, when treating this subject, although they do, indeed, lay great stress on the derivation of this practice from the apostles, by undoubted tradition. It is not denied, however, that after some time an undue deference was paid to traditions. It will be shown, hereafter, that many were misled from the simplicity of the gospel by this very means. By yielding too ready an assent to traditions, they were led to adopt false opinions, some of which were directly repugnant to the written word. It can have no weight with us, therefore, to adduce such a writer as Epiphanius, extolling tradition; for it can be proved, that from this source he imbibed many foolish notions, and fabulous stories, which the more impartial among the Romanists,

are as far from receiving, as we are. Nor, do we feel bound, on this subject, to adopt all the opinions any where found in the writings of Origen, Basil, Augustine, &c.; for we are persuaded, that this was one of the errors of antiquity, and that it was prolific of numerous evils, by which the church of God became greatly corrupted, in after times. But it answers no purpose to the Romish church to plead these authorities, for they themselves do not receive as articles of faith or parts of divine worship, all that these Fathers received from tradition. The principle of Protestants ever has been, that the Scriptures contain all things necessary to guide the faith and practice of believers; and they feel under no obligation, to receive any article of religion which cannot be proved to be contained in the Sacred volume. If, in the explanation of Scripture, light can be derived from tradition, or the universal opinion or practice of the primitive church, they are very willing to avail themselves of it; as they are to derive aid from any other quarter: but when they are convinced that the Fathers were fallible men, and actually fell into many mistakes, it would be folly to build their faith on their opinions; much more to adopt their errors, knowing them to be such. "THE BIBLE IS THE RELIGION OF PROTESTANTS."

The fact is, that the Fathers generally depended on Scripture for the proof of their doc-

trines; and called in the aid of tradition, only to confirm the doctrines which they derived from the written word. And here it is important to remark, that tradition, in the earlier and purer times of the church, was a very different thing from what it is now. Men who lived within one or two hundred years of the apostles, had an opportunity of ascertaining their opinions and practices, from tradition, with a degree of certainty, which is utterly unattainable, after the lapse of ages of error and darkness. If it should be agreed to receive as apostolical, every thing which the early Fathers professed to have received by tradition from the apostles, yet it would be most unreasonable to be required to admit as divine, the monstrous mass of traditions held by the Romish church, which has been accumulating for ages.

But it is capable of the clearest proof, that great uncertainty attended all matters received by tradition, which were not contained in Scripture, even in those times that were nearest to the days of the apostles. This fact is manifest, in the case of Papias, who was contemporary with the last of the apostles; and of Clement of Alexandria, who lived in the second century. If then tradition was so uncertain, at its very source, who can place any confidence in this channel of communication, after it has been increasing in impurity, for seventeen hundred years? If the stream had even been

pure in its commencement, it would, by this time, have become so turbid, and so poisoned, that no dependence could be placed in the information conveyed by it. But where certain things are said to have been received by tradition from the apostle John at second hand, it was deemed important to verify them, by a comparison with the Scriptures, as we have already seen. How unreasonable then is the demand, that we should now receive all traditions, which have come down to us, without any test of their genuineness, or any comparison of them with the Oracles of God!

Here also, it is necessary to observe, that there is a wide distinction to be made between articles of faith and institutions of worship, which are obligatory on all, and such modes of worship as were adopted under the general rule, of *doing all things decently and in order;* or from notions of expediency, with a view of conciliating those that were without. It may be proved, indeed, from the writings of the Fathers, that many things of this kind existed, which they never thought of placing on a level with the faith received from the apostles. And it may be here remarked, that it was one of the first and greatest mistakes into which the church fell, after inspiration ceased, to make too free a use of this doctrine of expediency. The abuses which have crept in under this specious disguise were not foreseen. The Fathers

saw no harm in an indifferent ceremony, to which, perhaps, their new converts were attached from long custom. By adopting things of this kind, the church, which was at first simple and unencumbered with rites, became strangely metamorphosed; and in place of her simple robe of white, assumed a gorgeous dress, tricked off with gaudy ornaments and various colours. And this practice of inventing new ceremonies, went on increasing, until, in process of time, the burdensome ritual of the Levitical law was not comparable to the liturgy of the Christian church. Who that now attends a Romish chapel, on some high day, would suppose that the service performed, was connected with the religion of the New Testament?

It is of no consequence, therefore, to adduce testimonies from the Fathers, of the second, third, and fourth ages, of the Christian church, to show, that such ceremonies were then in use, in some particular part of the church; or even in the church universal. All know by what means these things were received, and obtained prevalence. But let it be kept in memory, that the Fathers do not assert that these usages were derived from the apostles; nor do they pretend that they were necessary; and acordingly we find, that in different countries, they were not the same.

4. I come now to consider the last argument for unwritten traditions, which I have been able

to discover. It is this, that without the aid of tradition, the Scriptures will be of no real benefit to us, because it is only by this means that we can arrive at their true meaning. And, it is alleged, that the Fathers, in all disputes with heretics, when they referred to Scripture, still appealed to universal tradition, for a true exposition of the meaning of the passages adduced.

In returning an answer to this argument, would observe, that should we even grant all that is contended for, it would not be a concession of the main point in controversy. The claim of the Romanists, so unblushingly advanced, in the decree of Trent, already cited, is, "*That traditions relating both to faith and manners, are to be received with equal affection and reverence, as the Canonical Scriptures.*" And, lest we should be at any loss to know what articles of faith are pretended to be received by tradition alone, PETER A SOTO, one of the great defenders of the decrees of the Council of Trent, and a member of that Council, explicitly declares, "That the rule is infallible and universal; that whatever things the Romish church believes and holds, which are not contained in the Scriptures, are to be considered as derived from the apostles; provided the observances cannot be traced to any certain origin, or author." Every thing in use in this church, of the commencement of which we

are ignorant, must be ascribed to the apostles without doubt, and without further proof. And then he descends to particular doctrines and rites, which, according to this sweeping rule, we must receive, as handed down by tradition, from the apostles; among which are, "The oblation of the Sacrifice of the altar, Unction with Chrism or the holy oil, invocation of saints, the merit of good works, the primacy of the Roman pontiff, the consecration of the water in baptism, the sacrament of confirmation, of orders, of matrimony, prayers for the dead, extreme unction, auricular confession, and satisfaction, &c. But beside these, there are innumerable other things which are held sacred by the Romish church, which cannot be proved from Scripture, such as the mutilation of the Lord's Supper, the celibacy of the clergy, the distinction of meats, purgatory, pilgrimages, indulgences, the worship of images, and relics, the canonization of saints, &c. &c. Now, she cannot pretend that all these were received from the apostles, for some of them are in direct repugnance to the plain declarations of Scripture; and the occasion of the introduction of some of them is matter of history, and acknowledged by the Romanists themselves. And surely, it is not a very convincing argument of the apostolical origin of doctrines or ceremonies, that we do not know when they took their rise.

But the argument now under consideration, re-

linquishes this ground, and goes back to the Scriptures as the foundation of faith, but insists, that the true interpretation of Scripture can only be known by tradition. On which we remark ;—

That many things in Scripture are so clear, that they stand in need of no interpretation. They are already as plain as any exposition can make them. Who wants tradition to teach him, that Christ is the Son of God ; was born of the virgin Mary ; was crucified under Pontius Pilate; rose again the third day ; and ascended to heaven, whence he will come again to judge the world? If we cannot understand the plain declarations of Scripture, neither could we understand an exposition. If we cannot know what the apostles and evangelists mean, in their plainest declarations, when we have their very words before us, how shall we know what is the meaning of the vague language of tradition?

There are many parts of the New Testament, of which tradition has handed down no interpretation. If we wish to know their meaning, it is in vain that we apply to the Fathers, for instruction. They are silent. They have not commented on these books and passages. To which of the Fathers shall I go for an exposition of the book of Revelation? Or will the Pope himself, aided by all his cardinals, or by an œcumenical council, undertake to give us the true interpretation of this prophecy? It cannot be true, that

Scripture can be interpreted only by tradition; unless we agree to give up a large part of the New Testament, as wholy incapable of being understood.

We cannot build our faith on the interpretation of the Fathers, in all cases, because they often fall into palpable mistakes, which is not denied by the Romanists themselves; and again, they differ among themselves. How then can it be known what that interpretation is, which was received from the apostles? Must I follow JUSTIN, or IRENÆUS, or CLEMENT of Alexandria? or must I believe in all the allegorical interpretations contained in the Homilies of Origen, according to which, the plainest passages are made to mean something perfectly foreign from the literal sense? If the tradition which brings down this interpretation is not found in the writings of the Fathers, where is it? And how has it come down? Surely that which was never mentioned nor recorded by the ancient church, ought not to be received as an apostolical tradition; for as the great CHILLINGWORTH says, "A silent tradition, is like a silent thunder," a thing inconceivable. But we shall be told, that the church has preserved this deposit, and can testify that it was derived from the apostles. What church? And where is her testimony? And how do we know, that among such a mass of traditions, some have not crept in, which originated in other sources than the teaching of

Christ and his apostles? Who kept these traditions securely when the church was overrun with Gothic ignorance and barbarism? Who kept this treasure unadulterated, when Arianism was predominant? If there be such an oral law, containing an exposition of Scripture, how has it happened that there have existed such dissensions about doctrine, in the Romish church itself? And as it is acknowledged, that many usages of the church have had their origin, long since the apostles' days, what authority is there for these innovations? If the authority of the church was sufficient to establish these, it could as easily establish all the rest, and there is no need of apostolical tradition: but if there is a distinction to be made between observances derived from the apostles, and such as have been invented by men, how can we draw the line between them?

An implicit believer in the infallibility of the Pope, would deem it sufficient to answer, that his holiness, at Rome, knows certainly what is apostolical, and what not; what is obligatory, and what not. All we have to do, is to believe what he believes, or what he tells us to believe. Now, without disputing the pretensions of the Bishop of Rome, to such extraordinary knowledge, at present, I would ask, if we must go to an infallible judge to learn what are apostolical traditions, what use is there in traditions? Why does not this infallible teacher declare, at once, what is truth, in all

cases, without the trouble of searching into antiquity after traditions, which never can be found?

But if it be alleged, that the traditions which ought to be received as the rule of our faith, are such as were universal, and concerning which, there cannot be any doubt, I answer, that many such traditions may indeed be found, but what do they respect? Those very doctrines which are most plainly and frequently inculcated in Scripture; and of which we need no exposition; for as was said before, they are expressed as perspicuously as any exposition can be. But it affords us satisfaction to find the church openly professing, from the beginning, those truths, which we find recorded in Scripture. If it does not add confirmation to our faith, in these points, it gives us pleasure to find such a harmony in the belief of true Christians.

Finally, it is dangerous to rely upon traditions. Heretics, in all ages, sheltered themselves under this doctrine. Those with whom Tertullian contended, alleged, that the apostles did not know every thing necessary, as Christ declared he had many things to say, which they could not bear yet; or, there were some things which they did not teach publicly, nor commit to writing, but communicated privately to a few chosen persons, and therefore they declined the authority of Scripture. The same is true of those against whom Irenæus wrote. They appealed from Scripture to tradition, and he

answers them by showing, that universal tradition was conformable to Scripture.

Eusebius informs us, that Artemon, who asserted that Christ was a mere man, pretended that he had learnt, from *tradition*, that all the apostles were of his opinion.*

Thus also, Clement of Alexandria, says, "That Basilides gloried in having received his doctrine, through a few hands, from Peter; and Valentinus gloried, in having been instructed by one who had been a disciple of Paul."† The Marcionites professed to have received their doctrines from St. Matthew. The Arians, as appears by an oration against them by Athanasius, appealed to tradition, for the confirmation of their tenets.

In fact, this doctrine of unwritten traditions, has been justly compared to Pandora's box, which is calculated to fill the world with evils and heresies.

But not only have heretics availed themselves of this corrupt fountain, but good men have been deceived by lending too credulous an ear to traditions.

Papias, one of the hearers of John the apostle, was a great collector of traditions. He was inquisitive to know what each of the apostles had, at any time, said: and there was some chance of coming at the truth from oral tradition, by one who was a hearer of one of the apostles. But what valuable information did this good man obtain by all his inquiries, which is not in Scripture? Let Eusebius an-

* Liber v. c. 28. † Strom. xiii.

swer: "Papias adopted many paradoxical opinions by giving heed to unwritten traditions, (παραδοσεως αγραφε,) and received certain strange parables of our Saviour, mixed with fabulous things, among which was the error of the Chiliasts; by which many other excellent men were deceived, paying too much deference to antiquity and unwritten traditions. Even such men as Irenæus, Apollinarius, Tertullian, Victorinus, and Lactantius, were misled by these ancient traditions, so that they adopted an opinion for which there is no foundation in Sacred Scripture, and not only so, but which is repugnant to the doctrine of Christ and his apostles."

Clement of Alexandria, too, than whom no man of the ancient church was more celebrated, speaks of certain persons who had taken much pains to preserve the sayings of the apostles, handed down by tradition, among whom he mentions a Hebrew, who is supposed to be Papias; but when he comes to tell us what he had learned from these unwritten traditions, which is not contained in Scripture, it amounts to this, "That there was a public doctrine and a secret doctrine; the one *esoteric*, and the other *exoteric;* that the former was committed to writing, and was in the hands of all; but the latter was communicated secretly to chosen disciples. And if we may judge of the secret doctrine handed down by tradition, from some specimens of it which he had learned, we will not appreciate unwritten traditions very highly, in comparison with the

written word. Among these, is the opinion, that the Greek Philosophy answered the same purpose as the Law of Moses, and was a schoolmaster to bring those that professed it unto Christ; that this philosophy, as well as the Law of Moses, was able to justify men;-and that there were many ways of obtaining life. From the same tradition, he teaches, that Christ's ministry was finished in one year, which opinion Irenæus ascribes to heretics, and declares it as a tradition from John, that Christ, when he was crucified, was nearly fifty years of age. Clement relates it as a tradition, "That the apostles after their death, went and preached to the dead, who descended with the apostles into a place of water, and then came up alive," and many other like things.*

There is much reason to believe, that the corruption of the church, which commenced about this time, was owing to a disposition which began to be indulged, of lending too credulous an ear to traditions, and to Apocryphal writings.

But among the Fathers, no one gave himself up so entirely to unwritten traditions, and Apocryphal fables, as Epiphanius. His writings abound with things of this kind; but who would assert that we are bound to receive these stories, as articles of faith? Even the Romish church, with all her store of legends, will not receive as true

* Strom. Lib. II.

and necessary, all that is handed down by tradition from one and another of the Fathers.

From what has been said therefore, the conclusion is clear, that the Scriptures are complete without unwritten traditions: that no articles of faith, nor institutions of worship, concerning which the Scriptures are silent, have come down to us by tradition; that we have uniform, universal tradition, on those points, which are plainly taught in Scripture; that many things pretended to have been received from the Apostles by tradition, cannot be traced to them; and that many other things made equally necessary by the Romish church, can be proved to have originated many hundreds of years since the death of the Apostles. It has also been shown, that there is no certain method of distinguishing between what is apostolical, and what has been derived from other sources, unless we make the Scriptures our standard; that tradition cannot be our guide even in interpreting Scripture; and finally, that tradition has been the common refuge of heretics, and has greatly misled good and orthodox men, by inducing them to adopt wild theories, fabulous stories, and paradoxical opinions, some of which, are directly repugnant to Scripture.

The traditions of the Romish Church stand on no higher ground, than the traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees, in the time of our Saviour; but he rejected these traditions as having no authority, and as making void the law of God. *Why do ye*, says

Christ, *also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?—Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.—Howbeit, in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.* The same questions and reproofs may with equal propriety be addressed to the Pope, and the doctors of the Romish church. But WE say, *To the Law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to these, it is because there is no light in them.*

Thus have we brought this work to a close; and it affords us pleasure to believe, that most who read these pages, will be convinced, that THE BIBLE IS A COMPLETE RULE, BOTH OF FAITH AND PRACTICE. *The Law of the Lord is perfect.* What a treasure have we in the Old and New Testaments! Here, God speaks to us by his lively oracles. The truth is taught so plainly, in this Sacred volume, that he who runs may read. The way of life is delineated so distinctly, that the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein. We have, indeed, *a sure word of prophecy, to which ye do well that ye take heed, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.*

There is nothing lacking to him that is in possession of the Scriptures; for, *All Scripture is*

Matt. xv. 3, 6. Mark. vii. 7. Isaiah. viii. 20.

given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Let us then be grateful to God, and give him unceasing thanks for this precious deposit, which he has committed to his church; and which by his Providence he hath preserved uninjured, through all the vicissitudes, through which she has passed.

Let us praise God, that in regard to us, that night of darkness is past, in which there was a famine, not of bread, nor of water, but of the word of the Lord; when the light of this brilliant lamp was put out, or rather 'put under a bushel,' and the feeble erring light of tradition, was substituted in its place.

Let us be glad and rejoice that we have lived to see the day, when copies of the Bible are multiplied, and when many run to and fro, to circulate them; and let us wait in assured hope for the day, when THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD SHALL COVER THE EARTH, AS THE WATERS COVER THE SEA.—EVEN SO, COME LORD JESUS. AMEN.

2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

NOTES.

NOTE A.

PRIMUM DECRETUM QUARTÆ SESSIONIS, QUINTO APRILIS CELEBRATÆ, CONCILII TRIDENTINI, A. D. 1546.

Sacrosancta œcumenica et generalis Tridentina Synodus, in Spiritu sancto legitimo congregata, presidentibus in ea tribus Apostolicæ sedis legatis, hoc sibi ante omnia perpetuo proponens, vt sublatis omnibus erroribus, puritas ipsa Euangelii in Ecclesia conservetur, quod promissum antè per Prophetas in Scripturis sanctis, Dominus noster Iesus Christus Dei filius proprio orè primum promulgavit, deinde per suos Apostolos, tanquam fontem omnis salutaris veritatis et morum disciplinæ omni creaturæ prædicari iussit, perspiciensque hanc veritatem et disciplinam contineri in libris scriptus, et sine scripto traditionibus, quæ ex ipsius Christi ore ab Apostolis acceptæ, aut ab ipsis Apostolis Spiritu sancto dictante, quasi per manus traditæ ad nos vsque pervenerunt, orthodoxorum Patrum exempla secuta, omnes libros, tam veteris,quàm noui Testamenti (cum vtriusque vnus Deus sit autor) nec non traditiones illas, tum, ad fidem tum ad mores pertinentes, tanquam vel ore tenus à Christo, vel à Spiritu sancto dictatas et continua successione in ecclesia catholica conservatas, pari pietatis affectu,ac reuerentia suscipit ac veneratur. Sacrorum vero librorum indicem, huic decreto asscribendum censuit : ne cui dubitatio suboriri possit, quinam sint, qui ab ipsa Synodo suscipiantur, Sunt verò infrà scripti Testamenti veteris. Quinque libri Moysi, scilicet Genesis,Exodus, Leviticus, Numeri, Deuteronomium, Deinde, Iosue, Iudicum, Ruth, Quatuor Regum, Paralipomenon duo, Esdræ duo, primus scilicet et secundus, qui dicitur Nehemias, Thobias, Iudith, Ester, Iob, Psalterium Davidicum, centum quinquaginta Psalmorum, Parabolæ Salomonis, Ecclesiastes, Canticum Canticorum, Sapientia, Ecclesiasticus, Isaias, Hieremias, Baruch, Ezechiel, Daniel, duodecim Prophetæ minores, scilic et. Osee, Ioel, Amos, Abdias, Ionas, Micheas, Nahum, Habacuc, Sophonias, Aggeus, Zacharias, Malachias, Duo Machabæorum, primus scilicet et secundus. Testamenti noui, Quatuor Euangelia, secundum Matthæum, Marcum, Lucam et Ioannem. Acta Apostolorum à Luca Evangelista conscripta, quatuordecim Epistolæ beati Pauli Apostoli, scilicet ad Romanos

ad Corinthios duæ, ad Galatas, ad Ephesios, ad Philippenses, ad Colossenses, ad Thessalonicenses duæ, ad Timothæum duæ, ad Titum, ad Philemonem, ad Hebræos, Petri Apostoli duæ, Ioannis Apostoli tres, Iacobi una, una Iudæ Apostoli, Apocalypsis Ioannis Apostoli.

Si quis autem libros ipsos integros, cum omnibus suis partibus prout in Ecclesia catholica legi consueverunt, et in veteri vulgata Latina editione habentur, pro sacris et canonicis non susceperit, et traditiones prædictas sciens et prudens contempserit anathema sit.

Omnes itaque intelligant, quo ordine et via ipsa Synodus post iactum fidei confessionis fundamentum sit progressura, et quibus potissimum testimoniis ac præsidiis, in confirmandis dogmatibus et instaurandis in Ecclesia moribus sit usura.

Which may be thus translated. "The holy, œcumenical, and general Council of Trent, legitimately convened in the Holy Spirit, under the presidency of three legates of the Apostolic see, constantly proposing this before all things, that all errors being taken away, the Gospel in its purity may be preserved in the Church, which was promised before by the Prophets in the Holy Scriptures, but which was promulgated by our Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, with his own mouth: moreover, he commanded it to be preached to every creature by his apostles, as the fountain of all saving truth and moral discipline; which truth and discipline he provided should be contained in the books of Scripture, and *in unwritten traditions*, received from the mouth of Christ by the Apostles, or from the Apostles speaking by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and handed down to us; therefore THIS SYNOD following the example of the orthodox Fathers, receives and venerates with equal pious affection and reverence, all the books both of the Old and New Testament (for one God is the author of both:) Likewise those traditions relating to faith and manners, which were received from the mouth of Christ himself, or from his inspired Apostles, and which have been preserved in an uninterrupted succession, in the Catholic Church. Moreover, THIS

SYNOD, judges it proper to give a catalogue of the Sacred Books, lest any doubt should arise in the minds of any respecting THE BOOKS received by them, the names of which are here inserted in this decree; viz. *The Five Books of Moses, Gen. Exodus, Lev. Numb. Deut.*—Next, *Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Four books of Kings, Two of Chronicles, Two of Ezra*, viz. *The First, and the Second* which is called Nehemiah, *Tobit, Judith, Esther, Job. CL. Psalms of David, Proverbs of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Baruch, Ezekiel, Daniel, Twelve Minor Prophets, viz. Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Two of Maccabees, First and Second.* Of the New Testament. The Four Gospels, viz. *Matthew, Mark, Luke, John; The Acts of the Apostles*, written by Luke the Evangelist; *Fourteen Epistles of the blessed Apostle Paul, viz. To the Romans, To the Corinthians, Two; To the Galatians; To the Ephesians; To the Phillippians; To the Colossians; To the Thessalonians, Two; To Timothy, Two; To Titus; To Philemon; To the Hebrews. Of the Apostle Peter, Two. Of the Apostle John, Three. Of James One. Of the Apostle Jude, One. The Apocalypse, of John, the Apostle.*

"But if any one shall not receive as Canonical and Sacred, all these books, with all their parts, as they are used to be read in the Catholic Church; or shall knowingly and intentionally contemn any of the aforesaid traditions, let him be *anathema.*

"Hence all may understand, in what order and way, the Synod, after laying the foundation of the Confession of their Faith, will proceed; and what testimonies and proofs they will especially use in confirming doctrines, and in the reformation of manners, in the church."

NOTE B.

PASSAGE FROM TERTULLIAN.

The original of this passage is as follows, "Age jam, qui, voles curiositatem melius exercere in negotio salutis tuæ percurre Ecclesias apostolicas, apud quas ipsæ adhuc cathedræ præsident: apud quas ipsæ AUTHENTICÆ LITERÆ eorum recitantur, sonantes vocem, et repræsentantes faciem uniuscujuscunque. Proxima est tibi Achaia? habes Corinthum. Si non longe es a Macedonia, habes Philippos, habes Thessalonicenses. Si potes Asiam tendere, habes Ephesum. Si autem Italiæ adjaces, habes Romam, unde nobis quoque auctoritatas præsto est."

De Præscrip. cap. 36.

NOTE C.

GOSPEL OF THE NAZARENES.

There is no Apocryphal book of the New Testament, which has been so much spoken of both by the ancients and moderns, as THE GOSPEL OF THE NAZARENES. By some, not only of the Romanists, but also of the Protestants, it has been exalted very nearly to an equality with the Canonical books of the New Testament. It seems necessary, therefore, to examine its claims, with more attention than is requisite in the case of other books of this class.

This gospel was known among the ancients under several different titles. It was sometimes called, THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THE TWELVE APOSTLES; THE GOSPEL OF BARTHOLEMEW; THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THE HEBREWS; THE GOSPEL OF THE EBIONITES, &c.

It is the opinion of some, that this is the gospel to which

Paul alludes, Gal. i. 6, where he speaks of *another gospel*. However this may be, if we credit Eusebius, we must believe, that it existed as early as the beginning of the second century; for he represents Hegesippus as writing some things concerning *the gospel according to the Hebrews and Syrians*.*

Clement of Alexandria, cites from it the following passage, *He who admires shall reign, and he who reigns shall be at ease.*

Origen speaks of it in this manner, "If any one will receive the Gospel according to the Hebrews, in which our Saviour says, *The Holy Ghost my mother lately took me by one of my hairs, and led me to the great mountain Thabor.*" And in another place, "It is written in a certain gospel which is entitled, according to the Hebrews, (if any one be pleased to receive it not as of authority, but only for illustration of the present question,) *A certain rich man said to Christ, what good thing shall I do that I may inherit life? He said to him, O man keep the Law and the Prophets: he answered him, that I have done; he said to him, go sell all things that thou hast, and distribute among the poor, and come and follow me. The rich man hereupon began to scratch his head, and was displeased. And the Lord said unto him, how can you say that you have kept the Law and the Prophets? seeing it is written in the Law, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; but behold, many of thy brethren, children of Abraham, are clothed with nastiness, and ready to perish for hunger, while thy home abounds with all sorts of delicacies, and nothing is sent out of it to them. And turning about, he said to his disciple, Simon, who sat by him, Simon son of Joanna, it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.*‡

Eusebius, speaking of Apocryphal and spurious books, says, "In this number, some have placed THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THE HEBREWS, with which, they of the Jews who profess Christianity are very much delighted." And speaking of the Ebionites, he says, "They made use only

* Eccl. Hist. Lib. iv. p. 58. † Strom. Lib. ii. p. 380.
‡ Hom. in Jerem.

of that which is called, the Gospel according to the Hebrews, very little esteeming any others."*

Epiphanius has left several testimonies respecting this Gospel; among which are the following: "The Nazarenes have the Gospel of Matthew most entire in the Hebrew language; for this is still preserved among them, as it was at first, in Hebrew characters. But I know not whether they have taken away the genealogy from Abraham to Christ."

In another place, speaking of the Ebionites, he says, "They also receive the Gospel according to Matthew. For this both they and the Cerinthians make use of, and no other. They call it the Gospel according to the Hebrews; for the truth is, that Matthew is the only one of the New Testament writers, who published his gospel and preaching in the Hebrew language, and Hebrew characters."

And again, "In that Gospel which they (the Ebionites) have called, according to St. Matthew, which is not entire and perfect, but corrupted and curtailed, and which they call the Hebrew Gospel, it is written, *That there was a certain man called Jesus,—and he being about thirty years of age, made choice of us. And coming to Capernaum, he entered into the house of Simon called Peter, and opening his mouth said, When I passed by the lake of Tiberias, I chose John and James the sons of Zebedee, and Simon and Andrew, and Thaddeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas Iscariot, and thou Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom, I called, and thou didst follow me. I will therefore that ye be my twelve apostles, for a testimony to Israel.* . . . . . The meat of John the Baptist, according to this gospel, was, wild honey, the taste of which was like manna, or as cakes made with honey and oil. Thus they change the true account into a falsehood, and for locusts, put cakes made with oil and honey." "The beginning of the Gospel was this, *It came to pass in the days of Herod,*" &c. After relating the bap-

* Eccl. Hist. Lib. iii. c. 25, 27.

tism of Christ, as it is recorded in the other Gospel, except that it asserts, that the voice from heaven, saying, *This is my beloved Son*, &c. was repeated, it goes on to say, *That hereupon John fell down before him, and said, O Lord, I pray thee baptize me, but he hindered him, saying that it is fit that all these things should be fulfilled.* "See," says Epiphanius, "how their false doctrine appears every where, how all things are imperfect, disordered, and without any truth!" So also Cerinthus and Carpocrates, using this same Gospel of theirs, would prove that Christ proceeded from the seed of Joseph and Mary."*

But the testimony of Jerome respecting this Gospel is the most full. "Matthew also called Levi," says he, "who became from a publican an apostle, was the first who composed a Gospel of Christ, and for the sake of those who believed in Christ among the Jews wrote it in the Hebrew language and letters, but it is uncertain who translated it into Greek. Moreover, the Hebrew (copy) is to this time preserved in the library of Cæsarea, which Pamphilus, the martyr, with much diligence, collected. The Nazarenes who live in Berœa, a city of Syria, and made use of this volume, granted me the favour of writing it out. In which (Gospel) there is this observable, that wherever the Evangelist either cites himself, or introduces our Saviour as citing, any passage out of the Old Testament, he does not follow the translation of the LXX, but the Hebrew copies, of which there are these two instances, viz. *Out of Egypt have I called my Son;* and, *He shall be called a Nazarene.*" This testimony is found in Jerome's life of Matthew. And in his life of James, we find the following account. "The gospel also, which is called, According to the Hebrews, and which I lately translated into Greek and Latin, and which Origen often used, relates, *That after our Saviour's resurrection, when our Lord had given the linen cloth to the priest's servant, he went to James and appeared to him; for James had sworn,*

* Epiph. Hæres.

that he would not eat bread from that hour in which he drank the cup of the Lord, till he should see the Lord risen from the dead. And a little after, the Lord said, Bring the table and the bread; and then it is added, *He took the bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to James the Just, and said to him, my brother, eat thy bread, for the Son of man is risen from the dead.*"

And in a work against Pelagius, he says, "In the gospel according to the Hebrews, which is written in the Chaldo-Syriac language, which the Nazarenes use, and is that according to the Twelve Apostles, or as most think, according to Matthew, which is in the library of Cæsarea, there is the following history: *Behold the mother and brethren of Christ spake to him; John the Baptist baptizes for the remission of sins, let us go and be baptized of him. He said, in what have I sinned, that I have need to go and be baptized of him? Unless my saying this proceed perhaps from ignorance.* And in the same Gospel it is said, *If thy brother offend thee by any word, and make thee satisfaction, if it be seven times in a day, thou must forgive him. Simon his disciple said unto him, What! seven times in a day? The Lord answered and said unto him, I tell thee also till seventy times seven.*"

The same author, in his commentary on Isaiah, mentions this Gospel in the following manner; "According to their Gospel, which is written in the Hebrew language, and read by the Nazarenes, the whole fountain of the Holy Ghost descended upon him. Besides, in that Gospel just mentioned, we find these things written. *It came to pass when the Lord ascended from the waters, the whole fountain of the Holy Ghost descended and rested upon him, and said to him, My son, among, (or during the time of) all the prophets, I was waiting for thy coming, that I might rest upon thee: thou art my first begotten Son, who shalt reign to everlasting ages.*"

And in his commentary on Ezekiel, "In that which is entitled, The Gospel according to the Hebrews, it is reckoned among the chief of crimes, for a person to make sorrowful the heart of his brother."

In his commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, he has the following; "In the Gospel which the Nazarenes and Ebionites use, which I lately translated out of Hebrew into

Greek, and which is by most esteemed the authentic Gospel of Matthew, the man who had the withered hand, is said to be a mason, and prayed for relief in the following words: *I was a mason who got my livelihood by my hands; I beseech thee Jesus, that thou wouldest restore me to my strength, that I may no longer thus scandalously beg my bread.*"

"In the Gospel which the Nazarenes use, for the son of Barachiah, I find written, the son of Jehoiada." "In this Gospel we read, not that the veil of the temple was rent, but that a lintel or beam of a prodigious size fell down." "In the Hebrew Gospel we read, that our Lord said to his disciples, *Be ye never cheerful, unless when you can see your brother in love.*"

Concerning this gospel according to the Hebrews, very different opinions have been expresed by learned men. Some have even pretended, that if it was now in existence, it would be greatly superior to the Greek copy, but generally it has been considered Apocryphal, for very good reasons, some of which I will now set down.

1. It was never received by any of the Fathers as Canonical, nor cited as of any authority, by any writer, during the first four centuries.

For full proof of the fact here stated, I would refer the reader to Jones on the Canon, vol. iii.

2. This gospel was Apocryphal because it contained several things contrary to known and undoubted truths. Of this sort, are the passages which have been cited respecting Christ's manner of speaking, in regard to the baptism of John. Also the account which it contains of the oath of the apostle James; for it is evident that the disciples knew nothing of Christ's resurrection from the dead, until after that event occurred.

3. A third argument of the Apocryphal character of this Gospel, is derived from the ludicrous and silly relations which it contains. As that of the rich man's scratching his

head; and the Holy Ghost taking up Christ by one of his hairs, and carrying him to the great mountain Tabor, &c.

The most probable opinion of the origin of this Gospel is, that it was a corruption of the original Hebrew gospel of Matthew, by the Ebionites. These heretics having this gospel in their possession, and having departed from the true faith, mutilated the gospel of Matthew, by striking out such things as were unfavourable to their heresy, and adding such fabulous stories as suited their purpose. Of the fragments which remain there is not one which agrees exactly with the authentic gospel of Matthew. EPIPHANIUS expressly asserts, that the Ebionites used the gospel of Matthew alone, and that in Hebrew, but not entire, but corrupted, and adulterated; and that they had taken away the genealogy from the beginning, and commenced their gospel with these words, *And it came to pass in the days of Herod*, &c.

NOTE D.

AN ALPHABETICAL LIST OF APOCRYPHAL BOOKS MENTIONED BY ONE OR ANOTHER OF THE FATHERS, WHICH ARE NOT NOW EXTANT; EXTRACTED FROM "JONES ON THE CANON."

The Acts of Andrew.
The Gospel of Andrew.
The Gospel of Apelles.
The Gospel according to the Twelve Apostles.
The Gospel of Barnabas.
The Gospel of Bartholomew.
The Gospel of Basilides.
The Gospel of Cerinthus.

The Revelation of Cerinthus.
An Epistle of Christ to Peter and Paul.
Another Epistle of Christ produced by the Manichees.
A Hymn which Christ taught his disciples.
The Gospel according to the Egyptians.
The Acts of the Apostles, used by the Ebionites.
The Gospel of the Ebionites.
The Gospel of the Encratites.
The Gospel of Eve.
The Gospel according to the Hebrews.
The Book of the Helkesaites.
The False Gospels of Hesychius.
The Book of James.
The Acts of John.
The Gospel of Jude.
The Gospel of Judas Iscariot.
The Acts of the Apostles, by Leucius.
The Acts of the Apostles, by Lentitius.
The Acts of the Apostles, by Leontius.
The Acts of the Apostles, by Leuthon.
The False Gospels by Lucianus.
The Gospel of Matthias.
Traditions of Matthias.
The Acts of the Apostles, used by the Manichees.
The Gospel of Marcion.
The Gospel of Merinthus.
The Gospel according to toe Nazarenes.
The Gospel of Perfection.
The Acts of Paul.
Preaching of Paul and Peter.
The Revelation of Paul.
The Acts of Peter.

The Doctrine of Peter.
The Gospel of Peter.
The Judgment of Peter.
The Preaching of Peter.
The Revelation of Peter.
The Acts of Philip.
The Gospel of Philip.
The Gospel of Scythianus.
The Acts of the Apostles, by Seleucus.
The Revelation of Stephen.
The Gospel of Tatian.
The Gospel of Thaddeus.
The Gospel of Truth.
The Acts of Thomas.
The Gospel of Thomas.
The Revelation of Thomas.
The Gospel of Valentinus.

For an account of the writers who have mentioned these spurious works, the reader is referred to Jones on the Canon, vol. I. part i. c. xx. But it should be remembered, that all these books are spoken of as Apocryphal, by the writers who make mention of them.

NOTE E.

THE DECREE OF POPE GELASIUS, CONCERNING APOCRYPHAL BOOKS.

1. The Travels under the name of Peter, which is also called the Eight Books of St. Clemens, is Apocryphal.

2. The Acts under the name of Andrew the Apostle, are Apocryphal.
3. The Acts under the name of Philip the Apostle are Apocryphal.
4. The Acts under the name of Peter are Apocryphal.
5. The Acts under the name of Thomas the Apostle, are Apocryphal.
6. The Gospel under the name of Thaddeus, is Apocryphal.
7. The Gospel under the name of Thomas the Apostle, is Apocryphal.
8. The Gospel under the name of Barnabas, is Apocryphal.
9. The Gospel under the name of Bartholomew is Apocryphal.
10. The Gospel under the name of Andrew the Apostle, is Apocryphal.
11. The Gospels corrupted by Lucianus are Apocryphal.
12. The Gospels corrupted by Hesychius are Apocryphal.
13. The Gospel of the Infancy of our Saviour is Apocryphal.
14. The Book of the Nativity of our Saviour is Apocryphal.
15. The Book called the Shepherd is Apocryphal.
16. All the Books made by Lentitius the disciple of the Devil, are Apocryphal.
17. The Acts of Paul and Thecla are Apocryphal.
18. The Revelation of Thomas is Apocryphal.
19. The Revelation of Paul is Apocryhal.
20. The Revelation of Stephen is Apocryphal.
21. The Travels, or Acts of Mary are Apocryphal.
22. The Book called the Lots of the Apostles is Apocryphal.
23. The Book called the Praise of the Apostles is Apocryphal.

24. The Book of the Canon of the Apostles is Apocryphal.
25. The Letters of Jesus to king Abgarus is Apocryphal.

NOTE F.

CORRESPONDENCE OF CHRIST AND ABGARUS.

A copy of a letter written by King Abgarus to Jesus, and sent to him by Ananias, his footman, to Jerusalem.

Abgarus, king of Edessa, to Jesus the good Saviour, who appears at Jerusalem, greeting. I have been informed concerning you and your cures, which are performed without the use of medicines and herbs. For it is reported that you cause the blind to see, the lame to walk, do both cleanse lepers, and cast out unclean spirits and devils, and restore them to health who have been long diseased, and raisest up the dead: all which when I heard, I was persuaded of one of these two, viz. either that you are God himself descended from heaven, who do these things, or a Son of God. On this account therefore I have wrote to you, earnestly to desire you would take the trouble of a journey hither, and cure a disease which I am under For I hear the Jews ridicule you, and intend you mischief. My city is indeed small, but neat, and large enough for us both.

The answer of Jesus by Ananias the footman to Abgarus the king.

Abgarus, you are happy, forasmuch as you have believed on me, whom you have not seen. For it is written concerning me, that those who have seen me should not believe on me, that they who have not seen might believe and live. As to that part of your letter, which relates to my giving you a visit I must inform you, that I must fulfil all the ends of my mission in this country, and after that be received up

again to him who sent me. But after my ascension I will send one of my disciples, who will cure your disease, and give life to you, and all that are with you.

NOTE G.

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE LAODICEANS.

The Epistle of St. Paul to the Laodiceans.

1. Paul an Apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, to the brethren which are at Laodicea.

2. Grace be to you, and peace from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

3. I thank Christ in every prayer of mine, that ye continue and persevere in good works, looking for that which is promised in the day of judgment.

4. Let not the vain speeches of any trouble you, who pervert the truth, that they may draw you aside from the truth of the Gospel which I have preached.

5. And now may God grant, that my converts may attain to a perfect knowledge of the truth of the Gospel, be beneficent, and doing good works which accompany salvation.

6. And now my bonds, which I suffer in Christ, are manifest, in which I rejoice and am glad.

7. For I know that this shall turn to my salvation for ever, which shall be through your prayer, and the supply of the Holy Spirit.

8. Whether I live or die; (for) to me to live shall be a life to Christ, to die will be joy.

9. And our Lord will grant us his mercy, that ye may have the same love, and be likeminded.

10. Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have heard of the coming of the Lord, so think and act in fear, and it shall be to you life eternal;

11. For it is God who worketh in you;

12. And do all things without sin.

13. And what is best, my beloved, rejoice in the Lord Jesus Christ, and avoid all filthy lucre.

14. Let all your requests be made known to God, and be steady in the doctrine of Christ.

15. And whatsoever things are sound, and true, and of good report, and chaste, and just, and lovely, these things do.

16. Those things which ye have heard, and received, think on these things, and peace shall be with you.

17. And all the saints salute you.

18. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. *Amen.*

19. Cause this Epistle to be read to the Colossians, and the Epistle of the Colossians to be read among you.

NOTE H.

ST. PAUL'S EPISTLES TO SENECA, WITH SENECA'S TO PAUL.

Annæus Seneca to Paul, Greeting.

EPISTLE I.

I suppose, Paul, that you have been informed of that conversation, which passed yesterday between me and my Lucilius, concerning hypocrisy and other subjects; for there were some of your Disciples in company with us; for when we were retired into the Sallustian gardens, through which they were also passing, and would have gone another way, by our persuasion they joined company with us. I desire you to believe, that we much wish for your conversation: we were much delighted with your book of many Epistles, which you have wrote to some cities and chief towns of provinces, and which contains wonderful instructions for moral conduct; such sentiments, as I suppose you were not the author of, but only the instrument of conveying, though sometimes both the author and the instrument; for such is the sublimeness of those doctrines, and their grandeur, that I suppose the age of a man is scarce sufficient to be instructed and perfected in the knowledge of them. I wish your welfare, my brother. Farewell.

Paul to Seneca, Greeting.

EPISTLE I.

I received your letter yesterday with pleasure; to which I could immediately have wrote an answer, had the young man been at home, whom I intended to have sent to you: for you know when, and by whom, at what seasons, and to whom I must deliver every thing which I send. I desire

therefore you would not charge me with negligence, if I wait for a proper person. I reckon myself very happy in having the judgment of so valuable a person, that you are delighted with my Epistles: for you would not be esteemed a censor, a philosopher, or be the tutor of so great a prince, and a master of every thing, if you were not sincere. I wish you lasting prosperity.

Annæus Seneca to Paul, Greeting.

EPISTLE II.

I have completed some volumes, and divided them into their proper parts. I am determined to read them to Cæsar, and if any favourable opportunity happens, you also shall be present, when they are read; but if that cannot be, I will appoint and give you notice of a day, when we will together read over the performance. I had determined, if I could with safety, first to have your opinion of it before I published it to Cæsar, that you might be convinced of my affection to you. Farewell dearest Paul.

Paul to Seneca, Greeting.

EPISTLE II.

As often as I read your letters, I imagine you present with me; nor indeed do I think any other than that you are always with us. As soon therefore as you begin to come, we shall presently see each other. I wish you all prosperity.

Annæus Seneca to Paul, Greeting.

EPISTLE III.

We are very much concerned at your too long absence from us. What is it, or what affairs are they, which obstruct your coming? If you fear the anger of Cæsar, because you have abandoned your former religion, and made proselytes also of others, you have this to plead, that your acting thus proceeded not from inconstancy, but judgment. Farewell.

Paul to Seneca and Lucilius, Greeting:

EPISTLE III.

Concerning those things, about which ye wrote to me, it is not proper for me to mention any thing in writing with pen and ink: the one of which leaves marks, and the other evidently declares things. Especially since I know that there are near you, as well as me, those who will understand my meaning. Deference is to be paid to all men, and so much the more, as they are more likely to take occasions of quarrelling. And if we show a submissive temper, we shall overcome effectually in all points, if so be they are such, who are capable of seeing and acknowledging themselves to have been in the wrong. Farewell.

Annæus Seneca to Paul, Greeting.

EPISTLE IV.

I profess myself extremely pleased with the reading your letters to the Galatians, Corinthians, and people of Achaia. For the Holy Ghost has in them by you delivered those sentiments which are very lofty, sublime, deserving of all res-

pect, and beyond your own invention. I could wish therefore, that when you are writing things so extraordinary there might not be wanting an elegancy of speech agreeable to their majesty. And I must own, my brother, that I may not at once dishonestly conceal any thing from you, and be unfaithful to my own conscience, that the Emperor is extremely pleased with the sentiments of your Epistles; for when he heard the beginning of them read, he declared, "that he was surprised to find such notions in a person, who had not had a regular education." To which I replied, "that the Gods sometimes made use of mean (innocent) persons to speak by, and gave him an instance of this in a mean countryman, named Vatienus who, when he was in the country of Reate, had two men to appear to him, called Castor and Pollux, and received a revelation from the Gods. Farewell.

Paul to Seneca, Greeting.

EPISTLE IV.

Although I know the Emperor is both an admirer and favourer of our (religion,) yet give me leave to advise you against your suffering any injury [by showing favour to us.] I think indeed you ventured upon a very dangerous attempt, when you would declare [to the Emperor] that which is so very contrary to his religion, and way of worship; seeing he is a worshipper of the Heathen gods. I know not what you particularly had in view, when you told him of this; but I suppose you did it out of a too great respect for me. But I desire that for the future you would not do so; for you had need be careful, lest by showing your affection to me, you should offend your master: his anger indeed will do us no harm, if he continue a heathen; nor will his not being angry be of any service to us: and if the

Empress act worthy of her character, she will not be angry; but if she act as a woman, she will be affronted. Farewell.

Annæus Seneca to Paul, Greeting.

EPISTLE V.

I know that my letter, wherein I acquainted you, that I had read to the Emperor your Epistles, does not so much affect you as the nature of the things [contained in them,] which do so powerfully divert men's minds from their former manners and practices, that I have always been surprised, and have been fully convinced of it by many arguments heretofore: let us therefore begin afresh; and if any thing heretofore has been imprudently acted, do you forgive. I have sent you a book *de copia verborum*. Farewell, dearest Paul.

Paul to Seneca, Greeting.

EPISTLE V.

As often as I write to you, and place my name before yours, I do a thing both disagreeable to myself, and contrary to our religion: For I ought, as I have often declared, to become all things to all men, and to have that regard to your quality which the Roman Law has honoured all senators with; viz. to put my name last in the [inscription of the] Epistle, that I may not at length with uneasiness and shame be obliged to do that which it was always my inclination to do. Farewell, most respected master. Dated the fifth of the calends of July, in the fourth Consulship of Nero and Messala.

Annæus Seneca to Paul, Greeting.

EPISTLE VI.

All happiness to you, my dearest Paul. If a person so great, and every way agreeable as you are, become not only a common, but most intimate friend to me, how happy will be the case of Seneca! You, therefore, who are so eminent, and so far exalted above all, even the greatest, do not think yourself unfit to be first named in the inscription of an Epistle; lest I should suspect you intend not so much to try me, as to banter me; for you know yourself to be a Roman citizen. And I could wish to be in that circumstance or station which you are, and that you were in the same that I am. Farewell, dearest Paul. Dated the tenth of the calends of April, in the Consulship of Aprianus and Capito.

Annæus Seneca to Paul, Greeting.

EPISTLE VII.

All happiness to you my dearest Paul. Do you not suppose I am extremely concerned and grieved, that your innocence should bring you into sufferings? And that all the people should suppose you [Christians] so criminal, and imagine all the misfortunes that happen to the city, to be caused by you? But let us bear the charge with a patient temper, appealing (for our innocence) to the court (above,) which is the only one our hard fortune will allow us to appeal to, till at length our misfortunes shall end in unalterable happiness. Former ages have produced (tyrants) Alexander the son of Philip, and Dionysius; ours also has produced Caius Cæsar; whose inclinations were their only laws. As to the frequent burnings of the city of Rome, the cause is manifest; and if a person in my mean circumstances might be allowed to speak, and one might declare these

dark things without danger, every one should see the whole of the matter. The Christians and Jews are indeed commonly punished for the crime of burning the city; but that impious miscreant, who delights in murders and butcheries, and disguises his villanies with lies, is appointed to, or reserved till, his proper time; and as the life of every excellent person is now sacrificed instead of that one person (who is the author of the mischief,) so this one shall be sacrificed for many, and he shall be devoted to be burnt with fire instead of all. One hundred and thirty two houses, and four whole squares [or islands] were burnt down in six days: the seventh put an end to the burning. I wish you all happiness. Dated the fifth of the calends of April, in the consulship of Frigius and Bassus.

Annæus Senecâ to Paul, Greeting.

EPISTLE VIII.

All happiness to you, my dearest Paul. You have wrote many volumes in an allegorical and mystical style, and therefore such mighty matters and business being committed to you, require not to be set off with any rhetorical flourishes of speech, but only with some proper elegance. I remember you often say, that "many by affecting such a style do injury to their subjects, and lose the force of the matters they treat of." But in this I desire you to regard me, viz. to have respect to true Latin, and to choose just words, that so you may the better manage the noble trust which is reposed in you. Farewell. Dated 5th of the nones of July, Leo and Savinus consuls.

Paul to Seneca, Greeting.

EPISTLE VI.

Your serious consideration is requited with those discoveries, which the Divine Being has granted but to few. I am thereby assured that I sow the most strong seed in a fertile soil, not any thing material, which is subject to corruption, but the durable word of God, which shall increase and bring forth fruit to eternity. That which by your wisdom you have attained to, shall abide without decay forever. Believe that you ought to avoid the superstitions of Jews and Gentiles. The things which you have in some measure arrived to, prudently insinuate [make known] to the Emperor, his family, and to faithful friends; and though your sentiments will seem disagreeable, and not be comprehended by them, seeing most of them will not regard your discourses, yet the Word of God once infused into them, will at length make them become new men, aspiring towards God. Farewell Seneca, who art most dear to us. Dated on the calends of August, in the consulship of Leo and Savinus.

NOTE I.

MIRACLES ASCRIBED TO CHRIST IN THE BOOK, ENTITLED, "THE GOSPEL OF OUR SAVIOUR'S INFANCY."

Christ is represented as speaking in the cradle and telling his mother, that he was her son.

The swaddling clothes in which he was wrapped, when thrown into the fire, would not burn. When his parents entered Egypt in their flight from the cruelty of Herod, the girth of the saddle on which Mary rode, broke; and the

great idol of Egypt fell down at the approach of the infant Jesus.

By means of the babe's swaddling clothes, several devils were cast out of a boy's mouth, in the shape of crows and serpents.

A company of robbers, at the approach of Jesus, were frightened by being made to hear a sound, as of an army, &c.

It is related, that a girl was cured of a leprosy, by means of water in which Christ's body had been washed.

That a young man, who by witchcraft had been turned into a mule, was, upon Christ's mounting him, turned again into a man.

Many other cures and miracles are wrought by means of Christ's swaddling clothes, and the water in which his body had been washed.

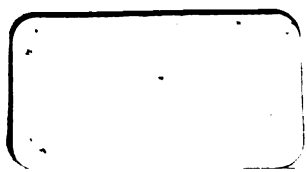
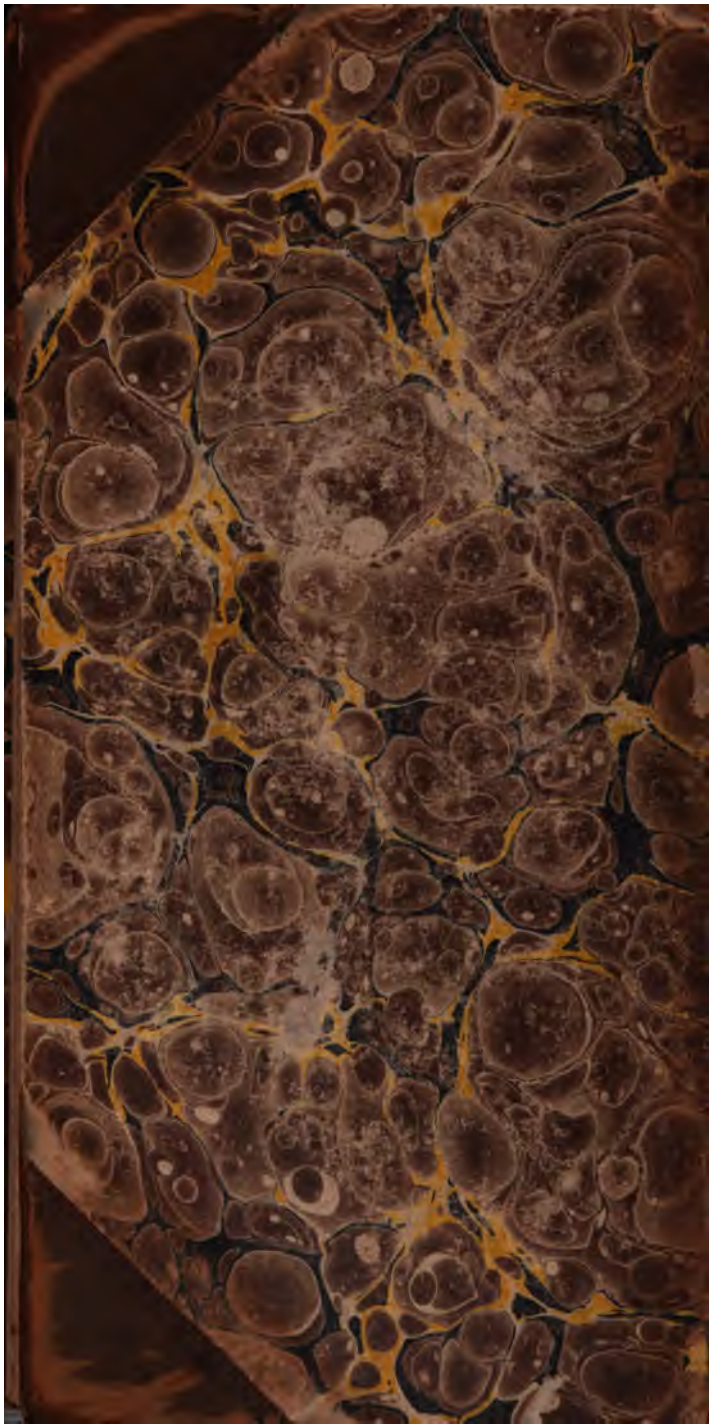
A girl possessed of the devil, who appeared to her in the shape of a dragon, and so sucked her blood, that she looked like a dead carcass, was relieved by means of the swaddling clothes of the infant Jesus, from which issued flames and coals of fire, which fell upon the dragon, so that he was frightened and left the girl.

Another woman had a son named Judas, who was inclined to bite all that were present, and if he found no one else near him, he would bite his own hands and other parts. This child they brought to Jesus, and Satan coming upon him as usual, he went about to bite the Lord Jesus, and because he could not do it, he struck him on his right side, so that he cried out, and in the same moment, Satan went out of the boy, and ran away like a mad dog. This child was no other than Judas Iscariot, who afterwards betrayed Jesus to the Jews.

When Jesus was about seven years of age he was at play with several other boys of the same age, who were occupied in moulding clay into the shapes of oxen, asses, birds, &c.

ing which had double figures, and which were furnished with points, and which not: on which the master said, 'I believe this boy was born before Noah.'

But after a while Joseph said to Mary 'Henceforth we will not let him go out of the house, for every one who displeases him is killed.'

When at the age of twelve years Jesus was at Jerusalem, a certain Astronomer asked him, whether he had studied Astronomy? Upon which he told him the number of the spheres and heavenly bodies, &c. There was there also a philosopher who asked the Lord Jesus whether he had ever studied physic; he replied and explained to him physics and metaphysics; the powers of the body; its anatomy, &c. But from this time he began to conceal his miracles, and gave himself to the study of the Law, till he arrived to the end of his thirtieth year.

[See the Gospel of our Saviour's Infancy, complete in the Second Volume of Jones on the Canon, from which work this translation is taken.]